

Letting Go

A Creative Collaboration

By Shasta Sovereign

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Dear Reader:

This is a follow up publication to our collected works titled “Homecoming” in February 2023. We received positive feedback from the participants and readers, so we decided to do it again. We found that people truly enjoy working on themed projects with a deadline. In this version, we wanted to experiment with something different. Instead of pairing up an artist and a writer to tell a story like we did in our previous Homecoming volume, we decided to let people work on solo pieces in this volume. We also included solo pieces by artists who shared topics of their own interest. It is our sincere hope that the following pages will move you as much as they moved us.

In Inspiration,

Shasta Sovereign



Author: Janet Kaye

It is difficult to let go of the pain of our past. It haunts us as we struggle to find a way to live. It is true when you have PTSD. No matter how many times we try to move on, sometimes something will trigger us and we fall apart all over again.

Have you ever smelled something that took you back to your childhood? Sometimes a song is that trigger for me. I used to listen to a lot of depressing music, until someone made me realize it. It dawned on me that I was always depressed listening to that certain type of music. I then started listening to upbeat songs I can dance to. My favorite songs to clean to are Salsa. I get to moving, and before you know it, my kitchen is getting cleaned!

I have learned to rely upon our Heavenly Father when I can't find a way out and am feeling trapped. I feel smothered, like I can't breathe. In the past, it felt that way. I didn't know how to escape. I tried to take my life a few times, but it never worked. I would end up realizing that it was not the right way to do things.

With me, I have to escape from the world and spend some time with my cat Bella. She is always there for me when I am having a hard time.

I usually watch Korean comedies when I need to escape from the world. It makes me laugh, and not think of the hardships I have to deal with. I mostly like the costume shows that teaches us the culture from the past, since I like history.



That is why I like reading the Bible. It has a lot of historical backgrounds from which we can learn. Alexander the great is in it, with many others from our history books. I never liked US history in school, it was too boring. I liked world history, because we were learning things about other cultures.

I also try to learn new cuisine, and love to try new recipes. I am on a low carb kick, so I am finding fun recipes that don't have a lot of sugar or other carbs. Watching a lot of Korean shows, I got hungry watching them eat. So far, I have made Korean Hot Pot, Bibimpap, and cheated with making the Jjajangmen noodles. I also tried kimchi pancakes. They are more savory than sweet. I love making French macarons, but they are time consuming. Everyone loves them.

I think I got off the subject, but these are things that help me cope with my PTSD and focus on things I like to do. I haven't been able to get my projects done, so I need to keep trying to get to bed early, and focus on one thing at a time so I can get rid of my clutter also.

Taking one day at a time, writing a to do list, and sticking to that list helps me to stay focused on the day, and not worrying about what tomorrow brings us. This helps me to focus on the now, and not my past and what I lost there.



Author: Golden Sapphire

When life can't go as planned,
Breathe, smile and remind yourself:
Being strong isn't being weak.

Let go of all you have done this year,
Start fresh, a new chapter needs to be told.
When life isn't going straight,
Go on the ride and enjoy it.
Because,
No matter where you are in your life,
Remind yourself
Being unique is being special.
Being you is one of a kind,
No matter what let go of what was.
Be excited for what will come.
Let go of pain, the quiet suffering, everything
That makes negative.
Lift the weight of it all off your shoulders.
It isn't weakness, it's strength.

So,
Pray if you need to, write to express,
Draw for others to understand.
When life isn't going as planned,
Embrace it, hug it, give it your all.

* * *



Author: Golden Sapphire

Dear Goddess,
Thank you for helping me
To let go of the things
I cannot change.

Dear God,
Thank you for helping me
To let go of things
I cannot control.

Dear Son of God,
Thank you for helping me
To let go of the things
I need to accept as a person.

Dear Angel of Death,
Thank you for helping me to
See, hear and think differently,
I know who I am now.

Dear Heavenly stars,
Thank you for guiding me on my path
Thank you for letting me look up
To your night sky,
Letting go of all my pain, my silent suffering.

Most of all
Thank you for bringing others in to my life that needs to be.
Thank you God and Goddess.



My Spirit is Beautiful Not my Disability

Author: The Always Reinventive Spilly Gypsy

“Letting Go”

Big Words...Big Moves...

Words and Actions you don't think about that much, until you get diagnosed with a disability or a chronic illness.

Before I was diagnosed it was said I could turn heads even at just 5 feet tall, that I had a presence with a smile, sensuality, grace in high heels but also had a fun-loving and even sometimes goofy spirit that they said people loved to be around.

Oh, I used to enjoy going to a festival and dancing, laughing and hugging with my friends and daughter while listening to the music and dancing, just having fun and seeing everybody else enjoying themselves as well. Was just the enjoyment of my life when I could just move freely back before the diagnosis of my disability.

“Letting Go”

Big Words...Big Moves...

Oh, I used to Hike between 8-13 miles 4-5 times a week with one of my dogs or by myself. I would put my earphones on with my favorite music and just go to my zone, with the beautiful nature surrounding me. I was loving life; I was in great physical shape. The feeling of being strong and healthy was like a natural drug, until I was diagnosed with my disability.



"Letting Go"

Big Words...Big Moves...

Oh, I used to love my career. Baking awesome delicious treats, decorating beautiful cakes, developing new recipes, and training new bakers and decorators (and watching them flourish). I loved merchandising, making the bakeries look so appealing and yummy that no one could walk by without buying something. Opening new bakeries or helping underdeveloped bakeries was so much fun and seeing them succeed was euphoric to me. I couldn't think of a better job or career, I loved every moment of it. Meeting new people, customers having so much fun, I loved it, until I was diagnosed with my disability.

"Letting Go"

Big Words...Big Moves...

So, I get injured at work I had several surgeries that unfortunately didn't seem to heal normally. I later find out why when I get diagnosed with CRPS then start suffering seizures. The CRPS then starts spreading throughout my body to the point I started walking with a Cane, then with a Walker (which I later called my Little Red Corvette) and no longer can enjoy those sexy high heels like I used to.

"Letting Go"

Big Words...Big Moves...

Wow, at this point no one seemed to see me the same way anymore, inside or out. It was either pitying me, treating me



like I was fragile, or just ignoring me half the time because they didn't know what to say anymore. It was like they wanted to know but waitNo I don't really want to know, it's too depressing. But all I wanted to say is,

YES, MY BODY IS NOT THE SAME, BUT MY SPIRIT IS STILL here and it's STILL BEAUTIFUL.

"Letting Go"

Big Words...Big Moves...

Now, when I do get to go to a Fun Festival, my Hun would take me and My Little Red Corvette (walker), which he would lovely do, even though it's not his thing, but friends were never there to go. They always had an excuse not to be with me. It's hard when there is an excuse that I'm too far away to visit, to take to lunch, to come and watch a movie with, to just talk to on a phone (even video chat), to go shopping with...you get the picture. And it's bad enough when I do get to go to a festival I must take my Little Red Corvette, which doesn't get you those "Yes You're Still Pretty" head turns. No, instead people are either ignoring you, moving out of your way (even out of courtesy) or pulling their curious children away from you without even a smile like you have leprosy.

"Letting Go"

Big Words...Big Moves...

So now Me and My Little Red Corvette are Letting go everyone's label of us and yelling!



That:

Yes, I still have spirit

Yes, I'm still sexy

Yes, I'm still pretty

Yes, I'm still funny

Yes, I'm still smart and still can contribute intelligently to a conversation.

I'm still here not Letting Go, I hate to tell everybody. Yes that fun person is still in this body, it's still here and she has not gone away. She is not Dead or Disappeared.

You may be "*Letting Go*"

Which are Big Words...Big Moves...

But guess what? I'm still here, Fighting, and Yes,

MY SPIRIT IS BEAUTIFUL NOT MY DISABILITY!



Author: Ronette

Not sure where to begin.
I guess I'm hoping it will give other people hope
With the violent monster called Cancer.
It all started in 2014: My daughter's senior year in high school
Not quite 18 at the time.
A true athlete on the basketball court, and with rodeo.
Well, that took a turn real quick
When she was diagnosed with brain cancer.
Our lives were flipped upside down
Realizing it will never be the same again.
As much as you try, it never will.
I have learned to go one day at a time,
As difficult as it is.
We're supposed to go before our children
As the thought of anything different
I can't even imagine, nor want to.
I always used to tell my daughter:
"Positive thoughts, positive outcome."
I have thought real hard
And could write so much more about our journey
But it would take forever.
But then, thinking maybe
It could help someone else
That is, or has gone through this.
So maybe,
I will continue with my thoughts and feelings,
As dark as they are.
Letting go will be the hardest part,
As a parent to do....

**Author: Richard**

I am a lucid dreamer. Lucid dreams are when you know that you're dreaming while you're asleep. You're aware that the events flashing through your brain aren't really happening. But the dream feels vivid and real. You may even be able to control how the action unfolds, as if you're directing a movie in your sleep.

I am also a mild hoarder, meaning I avoid throwing things away.

After my divorce and the sale of my house I purchased a storage portable container and packed everything I owned into the container thinking that magically, some day soon, I would be able to retrieve my belongings and start a new life.

Time stretched on and I moved my packed container to several locations. This was not easy as the containers are heavy and I did not have the right equipment to move it. I kept moving it and several years passed. I finally ended up with it in a storage yard where I paid \$150 a month just to keep it there.

The day came when the yard was sold and I was told I had to vacate. It hurt and I could not afford to move the container. I decided to review the contents and maybe sell some stuff to get money to move it.



As I examined the contents, some furniture, but mostly what can best be described as junk but important junk. I realized that the furniture I was hauling around for years could be replaced for a few hundred dollars at a thrift store.

As I sorted through belongings the logical (intellectual) part of me kept asking “Why is this important? I have not looked at it or touched it for years. It has no value whatsoever.”

The emotional part of me disagreed. It would not let go. This stuff was my life, my hopes of a new life surrounded by my familiar belongings.

I tried to get rid of it. I tried giving it away, hopefully going to a good home. I did roadside sales, went to the flea market. It took a couple of weeks. Eventually I did get rid of it, but I felt bad, like I lost a friend or lover.

Then I had a dream, I was in a medieval castle built of stone wandering around aimlessly at a party in the main ball room. I felt a tap on my shoulder. When I turned around I saw a dark figure looking much like the grim reaper. He quietly said “follow me”, which I obediently did and followed him to a passage way which led to a long spiral staircase leading downward. We went deeper and deeper till we came to the bottom when he pointed to a door, and said “open it!” I obeyed and when I opened the door, in a brightly lit room, I saw all of my belongings which I had just gotten rid of. I then



threw my arms in the air, turned around screaming “I can’t take this any more” and ran out of the room.

From that point on, I never felt bad about ridding my life from these things. I was free!

* * *

Author: Paradox

A familiar way of being
Holding on so tightly
Taut ... poised ... braced
Rigidly controlled
Hypervigilance embodied
Holding on so tightly
Muscles straining ... mind gripped
Clinging to this familiar sense of self
Clinging to what exactly, love?
This conceptual identity I’ve wound about myself oh so tenderly ...
In multifaceted hues and textures?
This armored shell that bears a name ... and a form
A past ... and a future?
This story ... this compelling narrative I lull myself to sleep with



That keeps me warm and insulated ...
Safe ... and oh so separate?
The story of a separate self
Unfolding in a dazzling, ever-shifting stream of experience ...
Of pleasure ... and pain
Safety and danger ... attachment and aversion ... resistance
and surrender?
This illusory sense of “me”?!
An intricately complex web ... sticky and binding
Yet oh so familiar
And an arising sense within that if one could only just “let go”
...
A faint, illusive whiff of freedom on the evening breeze ...
Holding on to “letting go” now ...
Clinging with all I’ve got
Grasping at this shimmering vision of release ...
Of loosening ... unwinding ... untangling ... breaking free
Of freedom
So intent on letting go
Urgently riveted attention
And only in crashing waves of failure ... in desperation
In the dark, engulfing whirlpool of despair ...
Pausing to reflect



To turn inward

And with nothing left to lose

To ponder ...

Was there ever anything to hold onto in the first place, love?!

And, for that matter, is there anyone here to “let go”??

Breathing in breathing out ...

Wondering ...

Is there ever anywhere else to get to, love?!

Or is “letting go” simply *being* here now ...

In this moment ... exactly as it is

Without trying to make it anything other ... any particular way

Just being here now ...

Without *doing* anything at all, love??



Artist: Lexi Lawrence



West lawrence

Letting go to the old things

Our young friend has been fascinated with vacuums since a young age. A very practical tool, yet very mystical, inducing feelings of being in a vacuum and in a void. It has gotten to the point of an obsession lately, and he is realizing this. Thus, he has decided to let-go of this and this picture is a symbol of this decision. We are proud of you, friend!

**Author: Lawrence Martin**

The past will always be the past for some people. They will have to intentionally try to remember the events from the past that basically shaped the person they have become.

For others, the past is almost as much of your thoughts as the present. Letting go of the events that shape their lives will be a challenge.

I know that as long as the memories of a childhood filled with horrible beatings and sexual abuse won't let go of me, I will never be able to forgive or forget.

I understand the theory behind having the ability to forgive my parents for abusing me so badly would help me get past my anger and allow me to move past it. It's not that easy. Some things are just unforgivable.

I spent so many years trying to let go of the past, that I didn't realize that I had so little time left.

Now I have to think about letting go of the future too. I have stayed as young as the memories that force me to see myself as the abused child as much as the strong war veteran that my physical appearance projects.

I know there's a good chance that I will never feel the warmth of another loving relationship or kiss another lover.



The things that I can still do now are going to be much harder or impossible for me to do, if I am even still alive in 5 more years.

With a fear of the past and the future, the only safe place for me to be is in the present. I guess that's why I like to travel so much.

When I am traveling through Europe, I am trying to fit as much as possible into every day. When I go to bed exhausted at the end of the day, my thoughts are on the events planned for tomorrow.

Everyday I am in awe of the world around me. Walking through the forest or through the desert, everything around me is a miracle of nature and so is every breath that I take.

Every night when I go to bed, I wonder if there's going to be a tomorrow. Just because there was one yesterday, doesn't mean that there's going to be one tomorrow.

The latest pressure on my mind has been to start letting go of some of the possessions that I have acquired over the years.

I just wish that I had acquired as many friends as I have possessions.

* * *



Author: Heart to Heart

They never knew this would happen...

The family moved into a new neighborhood due to the other one having too high of a crime rate and wasn't safe for the kids. Mom said "this neighborhood is safer," and dad said "It looks a little better for the kids." It's nice, but I liked the other neighborhood much more. "Kids! Come and say goodbye to your Grandfather before we leave for his appointment." Jack hugs grandpa. "I hope you get there safely," he said. Lilly did the same and said "don't get too bored in the car ride, oh and be careful not to slip walking down the stairs!" Grandpa replied, "Thank you kids, and I'll be careful walking down the stairs, and mind if the sprinkler was on this time. At my age I've learned that every moment of life is interesting, if your eyes are pointed in the right direction. I love you Kids." Jack was sitting on the couch when he called for Lilly. She came out of her room to and asked "What's up?"

Just then the phone rang and then the kids looked at each other. Jack motioned to Lilly, so she picked up the phone beside her and on the other end was a woman's voice. Certainly not their mother's. The voice on the line asked "I'm looking for Lilly or Jack. Is this the right number?" Lilly says "Yes, this is Lilly. Can I help you?" "Actually, I'm calling to help you. Unfortunately, your family has been in a terrible car accident," said the voice. "They are alright, but will not be home for a few hours. They asked that I bring you something to eat and tell you that your grandfather did not survive the accident. I am so sorry for your loss."



Lilly couldn't believe it, so she dropped the phone in shock and ran to her room. Jack startled, lost. He lost his grandfather, a man whose wisdom he respected greatly.

Lilly was in her room for two weeks before she went to her grandfather's grave. She had finally accepted him dying, and could let go of the grief she felt. "He's in a better place now," she thought. Jack took a full year before visiting his grave because he felt responsible, like it was his fault for reminding his mom about the appointment. He finally went to his grave and let go, accepting that it wasn't his fault.

That things happen in life you can't control, and they have a reason.

* * *

Author: EMC

Here is my story:

Last year I think this happened before Thanksgiving, my husband and I went to do our laundry at a local Laundromat that we frequently visited. A young man came in and asked for my help. I was somewhat taken aback. He asked to hold my hand, so I let him. I asked him how I could help him, as he seemed a little distressed. He told me that people were trying to hurt his mother, and I asked him who was? He replied, "They are," indicating no one present. He also told me that they were going to give her the heroin. Then he showed me a hypodermic needle with white liquid inside. I stayed calm and tried to keep him calm as well by keeping eye contact and speaking softly. I told him to get rid of it outside, but to be



careful of the needle, someone else could find it and get hurt. He started to get upset at this point, so he bent the needle and hid its contents in the garbage can. His mother was present and told the young man that his father was going to pick him up soon. At this point he became very angry and started yelling and cursing at her. After this, I went outside to smoke a cigarette and figure out what to do next. I had already put my cell phone in my pocket. I had a feeling I would need it. His mother then came outside and told me that her son was homicidal. I could see that he was decompensating quickly. His mother begged me not to call the police, telling me that they would kill her son. I calmly told her that they wouldn't unless he gave them reason to do so, and I would do my best to see that I wouldn't let that happen. Her son came outside and started yelling at her again. I went inside to tell my husband what was going on. I also gave him my phone telling him to call 911 if he thought he needed to. I was doing my best to de-escalate the young man. It wasn't working, he was becoming more agitated by the minute. The young man came up behind me, I sensed it was him, and put his hand on my shoulder.

I also noted that he drank some of my coffee. My husband became very upset at this, but took my cue and remained calm. The young man was very agitated now, he wanted me to drive him somewhere. I told him that I couldn't drive because I didn't have a license and didn't know how to drive. He then said that I was his wife now and my husband was dead. Then he said we were both dead. I went outside to try and defuse the situation, but before I went, I told my husband to now call 911. For some reason he didn't, but followed me



outside and I now had the phone. So he went back inside and I informed the young man's mother that I had no choice but to call 911. I did and as I looked through the window my husband was trying to keep himself and the guy away from him. 911 was demanding that I calm down. She wanted to speak to my husband. I replied, "He can't talk to you right now, this kid is threatening to kill him!!" She kept telling me to calm down, that my anxiety wasn't helping, and demanding to speak to my husband. I kept thinking, "where the Hell do they get these people." I also noted that she was trying to keep me on the phone usually, they just send you to the Sheriff department's dispatch. I had a feeling that everyone at the laundromat was in danger and the Sheriffs may be far away. Finally, my husband got on the phone and told the lady the same thing I had been telling except that now the kid had a broom and was trying to hit us, telling us that we were all dead. We (my husband and I) managed to get into our vehicle but not before the young man hit the passenger side window with the broom handle. All the while I was still on the phone with the 911 operator from Hell. Finally, I was on the phone with the Sheriff's Department dispatch, I explained everything that happened and gave descriptions of the young man, his mother, aunt and other man who was in the place at the time. When the Sheriff called me back, I explained that we were out of danger but I wasn't sure about anyone else in the laundromat. Also, I asked that they not come with lights and sirens, I suspected this kid was having some sort of mental breakdown. My previous occupation was a psychiatric RN on an adult ward. I didn't want this young man to be shot just because of his psychiatric issues. The police came and arrested him. They asked us if we were in fear of our lives.



My husband and I both said yes and they took him away. So we got our laundry and left. But things were far from over.

During the Christmas holiday, we ran into his mother. She begged me to help her son. I told her that I already had. The police didn't shoot him and I asked for a psychiatric consult for him. And to leave us alone. We still saw her from time to time as we all live in the same community. I later learned that we had a criminal protection order, from victim's services. Victim's Service is part of the DA's office and are a wonderful group of people. They kept me informed about what was happening with the trial, step-by-step. Well, to make a long story short, the young man got time served and will come back to our community. I'm not looking forward to this but having my impact statement read in court gave me a sense of closure. I hope that the young man really does get the help he needs and maybe the next time I run into him he'll apologize. If not, that's ok too. We just want to live in peace.

To the Shasta County Court: My Impact Statement

If it may please the court, I have a few things to say regarding the defendant.

Mr. D has caused my husband and I mental anguish, heartache, a sense of safety and security we once felt in the community we all share. I have always felt safe no matter what time of day or night I walked the streets of Burney, California. Now because of what you have done, I don't feel that way anymore. I don't think I will ever feel safe again. I do believe in the Criminal Justice System. I hope you will serve



whatever sentence behind bars that a judge sentences you to; but I worry about what will happen once you are released back into the community. I truly believe that you will fall through the cracks of society and continue your behavior. I have had many dealings since this incident with your mother, who begged me to help you. And even though you threatened to kill my husband and I, I still helped you. I told the Shasta County Sheriff's Department not to come with lights and sirens because I was afraid for your mother and others who might have been in the area, and your safety as well. I knew as a retired psychiatric registered nurse that you may be going through some sort of crisis and I didn't want you to be harmed by the police if this was indeed the case. But you could have extended my husband and I the same courtesy. I haven't been the same since this incident, I have nightmares every single night. I haven't had more than 4 hours of uninterrupted sleep. I'm constantly looking over my shoulder to see who might be behind me. I call one of my doctor's at least once on a weekly basis. I can no longer sleep soundly. I'm in fear of your mother and the people who are around her. She comes to my job now, which I once considered a safe Haven. But no more. My husband is fearful as well, he worries if I'm gone too long getting the mail, which is only 100 yards from our home. I can walk to the store, not even to the gas station that is less than a half a mile away. I wake up screaming more nights and mornings than I can count. I myself suffer from mental illness, and I've had to have my medication changed several times since this has happened. You sir, need help. And for all of us that live in Burney, I pray you receive it.



We have no sense of safety or security anymore. My husband worries a lot more now. He has been a resident of Burney for about 20 years, and now we don't want to live here anymore. We just don't feel safe, you took that from us. My husband is 74 years old and he certainly didn't deserve this. You made him feel like he couldn't protect me, you took that from him. And that is something I cannot forgive you for. We still have to use the laundry mat where this incident took place, we wait as long as we possibly can to go. It doesn't matter what day or time of day, we feel frightened, anxious, and we feel the need to protect ourselves. Your mother has been there quite a bit when we are there, and we relive the ordeal again, and again every time we see her. My father use to tell me growing up, "that life wasn't fair." I understand this and accept it, however what you have done to us was truly cruel and criminal. I pray that you receive the maximum sentence for your crime and that you NEVER return to Burney.

Thank you for your time and attention,

* * *

Author: AJ

"Let go"
was a whisper

I snapped my head up and the wind gushed in my face.
I look around me and see a bright blue sky against the harsh
pine trees and yellow-green hills.
Behind me is the lake.



"Let go"

Louder this time

What does it mean to "let go"?

Something I hear all the time is to just "let it go"

To let go means

Release.

"Let go"

Still louder

But what should I hold onto?

"Let. It. Go."

This time.

A yell

I drop the tear-stained letter in the lake.

Turn my back.

And walk home.

To let go means to take care of yourself.

To not give in to the negativity

Let go of the version of yourself that says

"I can't"

The words

"I can't"

Play in my head all day every day.

What you're meant to let go of is what no longer serves you



Don't hold on to those things that tear you down day by day,
hour by hour, minute by minute.

Hold on the love around you and the strength inside of you
So you can make someone that you don't need to "let go" of

I can.

* * *

Author: Phoenix Rising

Wind dodges between sun and shade
Tree tops trying to catch up, then bending,
Laughing, just letting their hair down
Branches filling the air
Bouncing on the ground
Gasping, wondering

Could the wind be
Indeed, might the wind be
The everpresent breath—
Even the kiss—
Of God?

Wind dances with white wispy clouds
Scattering across the cobalt sky
Then reappearing as dense gray clouds
Pelting the shivering earth
with creamy white snow, wondering

Could the wind be
Indeed, might the wind be



The everpresent breath—
Even the kiss—
Of God?

I curl on my couch,
My dogs wrapped around my feet,
Watching the swaying tree tops
Marveling at the dancing snow and gray clouds,

Nibbling chocolate chip cookies

Filled with wonder
Surrendering
To
The omnipresence
Of God

* * *



Painting by: The Always Reinventive Spilly Gypsy



Artist: Grace D'Shasta



Title: Letting Go has been the theme of my life

Author: Sri

Letting Go. Huge subject. It's been the theme of my life from the youngest age I can remember. It started off as being able to let go easily and then it became about holding on as tight as I could even after people and things were wrested from my clutching grasping hands.

Now it is about letting go of concepts and beliefs that don't serve me.



I had to let go of my parents and little brother at the age of 5 or 6 or so. From there, as I was being raised in ashrams in the religion, I would sometimes get a couple to be care about me enough on some level to be my parents. This didn't change much for me. I still belonged to the Hare Krsna Society and stayed in the school's (Gurukula) ashram but I got to go on special trips or get a present or have someone hold my hand during a temple ceremony, because I was their daughter. But, as soon as the school moved or the parents didn't want to commit to me any longer, it was time to let go of those temporary acting parents. I don't remember feeling any sadness. I was not capable of forming attachments.

As I progressed in years to teenager, still in the ashrams, and after many parents and towns and homes said good bye to, I began to have feelings about leaving friends and temples (that had become home for a year or so) and I remember crying in private as my heart broke.

One of the first and most painful goodbyes was to my friend and sister (we had adopted each other as such) when I was 16, who was mortally injured in a car accident and after a week in a coma, passed away. She had moved to France. I was in upstate New York. But we wrote to each other all the time. I still have her letters, almost 40 years later. My teachers were kind enough to not punish me for crying so grievously. They were heartbroken, too, I think.



I moved to Australia shortly thereafter, and a couple years after that began getting to know non-Hare Krsna men. I hadn't known any men at all but this was a whole new world, going to night clubs, etc. I had no idea how to handle my sexuality, my emotions, my heart, all of that. But who



Me and Candrahasa. The doll she is holding was gifted to me when I was 10 years old by my last set of adoptive parents. The doll was wearing a sari when I got her. We could only play with her away from the ashram on Sundays.

can get all of that right anyway? For the first couple years in Australia I always assumed I would return to the farm in upstate New York where I ran the barn. But it got sold. Another letting go.

The next painful letting go was my room-mate (I was his live-in maid) getting brutally murdered while I was out at a



friend's that night. I never went back to the house. All of my childhood diaries, Indian clothes, everything I had to leave there at his house. It was part of a murder investigation, my prints on everything. I left Australia quickly with my adopted dad (yes one set of parents had finally committed to being my parents, still leaving me in the school though). Another HUGE letting go. I loved it there so much after I had accepted that it was now my home.

Major transitions and culture shock moving back to U.S. but to the West Coast and to a community where all of my former fellow gurukula mates were now adults and having sex and partying after I had only known them in the strict Hare Krsna upbringing. As I tried to come to terms with all that, I kept seeing my room-mate/employer's dying eyes pleading to me, calling out to me as he died after being beaten to death, his hands bound and tied to a doorknob in his house. And the whole other world of friends, the new culture which I really loved, I had left behind in Australia.

Then dating. Heartbreak. "Friends" stealing my love object. All that drama. Letting go, not by choice. Holding on but to no avail.

Then I met Gopal.

We finished each others' sentences. We were so close, so mystically, beyond this life connected. We saw our past lives together. He was a ray of sunshine in so many people's lives



with his blond hair, violet blue eyes, so funny and creative, and I was his love, his sweet heart, his pretty kitty.

We spent a lovely day together on May 7th 1991 after being together a few beautiful months. By 4 am on May 8th 1991 he was gone. After 5 hours and 45 minutes of operating on him, trying to repair his bruised heart, removing a lung, they never even had time to get to his brain to assess activity, the surgeons at UCLA closed up and let him officially die.

In the aftermath, I remember looking at a lovely framed photo of a Deity (statues worshipped as God in Hinduism and in the religion I was raised in) of Krsna in His form as Giridhari (the mountain lifter), that I owned and prayed to and tearfully asking Him, "Were you jealous that I loved him so much that I almost forgot about You?"

Throughout my life, no matter who or what came and then left, there was one presence always there, always with me as I looked for the last time at people, homes, belongings, places, I had just begun to hold onto as part of my Earthly existence and identity. And it was instilled in me by the teachers and other authoritative figures, and reinforced by ancient scriptures, stories, works of art: the concept of the truth of the existence of a Supreme Being who is situated in my heart, in every atom of every cell in my body, inside every living being, animate, inanimate. We worshipped Him in His human form of Krsna, the flute-playing cowherd boy. Everything we did was in service to Him. I believed 100% in His existence, His



protection of and care for me, His fulfilment of all my desires. Nothing happened without His sanction. Any suffering could be alleviated by remembering Him. The 2nd chapter of Bhagavad-Gita, the shlokas of which I still have memorized, taught us we are not these bodies. The soul does not suffer nor die. So no need to lament when a body dies. Within dying bodies, the souls they contained, could be comforted and liberated by simply hearing or chanting His glorious names. And I believed this wholeheartedly. There was a lot less suffering and lamentation.

It was in the letting go of this infrastructure such as it was established in me from the youngest age, that things began to become very burdensome for me.

For many years, in an attempt to make my life liveable alongside the severe onset of post-traumatic stress disorder, I abandoned certain aspects of the philosophy and belief system that went along with my religious upbringing. I even tried to let go of the God -as-a-person part of it. I let myself become more dependent on humans. And not in a way where they served me but where I was dependent on their need for me. Men needed me for pleasure and other servitudes. My 6 children needed me for everything. That part has felt good. It is biological and nature and the universe has given them to me. I could always summon the courage and strength to take care of their needs even when severely sleep-deprived, suffering depersonalization and other threats to my grasp on reality and my very identity.



I also began to feel responsible for the welfare and comfort of every living being, plant, bug, bird, wild animal, domesticated pet and plants. The inconvenience inflicted on all living beings by humans (the meat industry, forest thinning and clearing, flat-out abuse by evil people) translated to suffering and the thought or image of it occurring has made me want to end my life. This evolved into me being angry at non-human predators in nature. I still avoid nature shows or photos that feature that. I respect the struggle of the ones being predated on. I couldn't even look out anywhere in nature, aside from my sky phenomena viewing and photography, and not see or imagine suffering, everything was something to rescue. Gardening and the apparent need to weed (which I see as ending a life of another being) gave me more stress than pleasure.

This recently came to a head when I saw the forest thinning and clearing activity in the south end of our town, a spot in nature we are allowed by the owners of the property, to spend time in and which I have been very protective over for many years. There was nothing I could do about it, the two thirds plus of the trees of the forests being cut down. Just yesterday I saw two birds flying in and out of a downed tree that is not dead and my heart began breaking. What if they are nesting in there and since it is one of the trees being harvested/processed to be sold, the big merciless machine comes along and tears their lives apart? But there is not a thing I can do.



So, I think back to my childhood and recall how I was locked in basements and closets, never given human comfort or affection, sometimes had my ears and hair yanked, my face slapped so hard, condemned to be crazy like my biological mom who I witnessed be abused by them, threatened to be kicked away from protection by Krsna, from the outside world of demons and non-believers who would kidnap and deprogram me, if I showed any attachment to my birth family. How did I get through that? How did I not go into depression as a child? How do I have any sense of childhood wonder and magic to cherish and feel nostalgic about?

It has to be my belief in Krsna. That He takes care of everything for me. All I have to do is surrender (let go) and trust in Him. He is my best friend.

Is the willingness to practice reindoctrinating myself and my belief system with sufficient diligence to have this become a conviction, enough though? I am attempting to do this while letting go of a belief and habit that has been running my life for years. The belief that I need a man to feel complete, to feel worthy, to feel I matter; the habit of doing all I can to be of meaning to a man. It's probably why I ended up raising 6 children on my own.

I don't have the energy to psychoanalyze the relationships that led to the creation of my 6 children and motherhood is sacred to me so I'll leave that untouched here. But the last 8 years or so I have seen how men of the caliber I was mutually



drawn to, only had one concern with regards to me which was: was I available for sex or not?

There are many feelings I wish to let go of with regards to this huge aspect of my life. I don't want to feel obligated to let a man use my body to temporarily fulfill a need. And luckily my body is my ally in this. I'm simply in too much pain to allow such a thing any longer. Don't get me wrong, there was pleasure at some level, but was it the temporary fix, the feeling I got that I mattered for those couple of hours here and there and the continued interest by men in at least some aspect of my being which was over-riding the deep knowing that something was really not right or just the physical pleasure commonly associated with this activity? Whatever the cause, subsequently, whether it was from the shame and self-hatred that I know my last partner wanted me to feel and the feeling that I mattered not a bit to him, I have been suffering physically ever since I accepted as truth all the hateful things he said. I tried so hard to shield myself and shake it off. Or maybe it's from my body telling me that the last partners I've had were not good for me in any way. Either way, I'm scared at what could be brewing in my body, what has broken because I did not heed and protect it.

And so I want to protect all aspects of my being while I figure this out and while I let go of what has become a huge part of my identity and sense of meaning for myself. Due to it being such a part of my self-acceptance and so incredibly hard to say no to, even while in agony, I see that I might be subconsciously thinking I have to make myself physically



unavailable to the point of becoming physically unattractive and unappealing to the opposite sex. And it is a process now set in motion that I can't seem to stop. Due to this, aside from my being a mother, I see nothing to look forward to except deterioration of my physical and mental state and my eventual end.

When my goal has been to one day find my loved one, my solace, my shelter, my haven, my savior, rescuer I, and now I see the truth that all humans are imperfect, fallible soldiers, even when they do come from a heartfelt place, it is a huge letting go.

My hope is that the truth (my relationship with the Supreme Source actualized, could it be?), will take the place of all of these dreams built on illusory, erroneous concepts.

I am consciously letting go of the habit of putting men or any human on a pedestal, something for me to be good enough to attain. I am also letting go of seeing and feeling and knowing my worth based on others' or what I imagine others' opinions are of me. That is where my relationship with Krsna or whatever form I choose to relate to God in becomes very important.

It becomes the most important relationship.

If and when I am healed in body and mind or have figured out a way to live with peace in me, I will hopefully be drawn to equals.



Letting go can entail, mean and necessitate, many changes in perception and belief systems. I can see it as lightening my load, dropping burdens, so I can move forward unencumbered to my next stage of my soul's evolution. Really, it's just about being able to live life not in a constant state of agony and sadness, building identity on a solid and truthful foundation, and feeling supported by a reliable force.

I don't know when I first allowed myself to start becoming attached to people or situations, places, things even. It seems to have been unavoidable. I don't think I'll ever stop caring about people. I am a mother to 6 children, a grandmother to one baby and I don't want to let them go, ever. But I also know the nature of this world and I have to practice self preservation and not leave myself open to devastation. I seek to come from a solid place inside of myself where I can let go as required and do so with dignity and wholeness.



The photos are of me when I was good at letting go. Me in Dallas Texas. Living at the Hare Krsna Boarding School (Gurukula). Age 7.



Author Erika Rae

This is a letter and it's purpose is to inform you
That it's time to let you go.
Over the years we have been inseparable
You and I,
And if I don't leave you now,
It won't be until I die.
At times you have been my best friend
But at all times you have been my enemy.
And for far too long now
I have stayed paralyzed in fear
Of the thought of you
Straying very far from me.
I've been enslaved, stuck in time and space,
Mesmerized by your touch.
Seconds, minutes, hours, and days
I have steadily wasted
Because of our ways
And the burden is becoming too much.
I'm so tired of being sick and tired
So that's it this time enough is enough.
Intertwined with you
I've danced too close to death.
And I have to let you go now
Before you take
What little I have left.

* * *



Author: Maris

Letting go is the hardest healing process to go through. You have to let go of who you were to allow yourself to become who you are.

Living with a Narcissist has been difficult; it's emotionally and physically draining. I have had enough! Standing up for myself has been so relieving, yet so scary. I should have done this a long time ago. But because I was afraid, I never did. Also because I have 4 beautiful children with this man. Women tend to stay with the father of their children, regardless of the situation. Not knowing that it's not only hurting yourself but your children as well. I've been with my husband for 16 years now.

The beginning of a relationship is beautiful yet hard. At least it was in my relationship. I had barely turned 18 years old. I was working, making money on my own. I didn't have to ask my parents to buy me anything. I didn't depend on them anymore. I really liked that idea. I did homeschooling. It was great. And it was during the harvest season when I met my husband. I thought he was the love of my life. Boy was I wrong. I ran away with him having only known him for about one and a half months. Bad idea if you ask me. If I could go back, would I do it all over again? Yes. I never regret having my children. Everything was great in the beginning. Life was beautiful. Until things started to change.



He became possessive, jealous and controlling. Sometimes I thought this was normal. Why? Because this is how much I loved this man. Father of my children. Sometimes we are blinded from reality when you fall hard in love for someone. It got to the point where I was no longer able to go out on my own. To be honest, I only went out 3 times during my marriage. I have always been home with the kids. And I went out another 2 more times this last year. This was when I went out to eat dinner with 2 really good friends. Technically, I didn't go out alone since both my girls had to accompany me along for dinner. Because this is how he wanted it to happen. If I didn't take my girls, he would have never let me go out.

I saw the signs. One after another. Yet I stayed. Noticed that little by little year after year I was losing myself. I didn't have any interest in things that I used to enjoy. Yet I stayed. I noticed that we were falling into a routine, that we would argue and not speak for days. We got along for a few days and then started all over again. This went on for years, 8 years to be exact.

I sit here thinking: Why did I let this go on for so long? Was this normal? Do all marriages go through something similar like this? At one point I thought the problem was me. That I was not good enough. It was torture to get of out bed and look at myself in the mirror every single day. Battling my own demons. Until I said: "I've had enough."



Why stay with someone who will continue to hurt you over and over again? In my mind, I had that tiny little hope. Thinking that one day this man will change. Deep down I knew that he would never change.

Now, I know that letting go will become a lot easier since I finally put myself first. I need to close this chapter of my life. Divorce. Starting over. I already took that step and finally said "I need a divorce."

* * *

Pure Panic

Author: Deanna

I'm lost
I follow directions
I take the meds
I wake up in the night in pure panic
My heart is racing
I can't stop shaking
I can't sit still
I begin to think the worst
My head tells me I'm dying
Why do I have to live this way?
Am I alone?
I am afraid to go back to sleep
What if I don't wake up?
Will anyone care?
Will anyone notice?



Doubt fills my mind
But I begin to stop caring
I lay back down
I tell God to take me in my sleep if it's my time
I don't understand why I have to live this way
The panic subsides and I just close my eyes

* * *

Familiar Face

Author: Deanna

I look throughout this town in all these familiar places,
Places we used to go and things we used to do.
All the places that felt so comfortable at one point in my life
And now seem so distant.
I search the crowds of people for the one familiar face
That I have no right to see as I was the one who ran away
All those years ago.
And now, you belong to someone else
And I have no one to blame but myself.
You protected me from my nightmares
And pushed me towards my dreams and yet,
My stupid little mind still told me to run away.



All these years could have been so different

If I could have just imagined what my life

Was going to be without you.

What it would feel like to have no one

And wake up every day alone with no reason

To follow anything.

I would give anything to go back,

To feel your arms around me when I wake up,

But I know I can't.

I guess for the little time I have left here

I will continue to search for your familiar face,

Just to know that you are happy and ok.

* * *

Unique

Author: Golden Sapphire

Don't compare yourself

To others.

We're like a snowflake in winter,

Each one is different unique.

Like a star in night sky,

A flower in spring time,



Leaves falling from trees on autumn day.
Be happy for the air we breathe,
The water we drink and the food we eat.
Be proud how many steps you took,
Not many are lucky to take those steps.

* * *

Emotion forest

Author: Golden Sapphire

Hopeless stream of tears
Disbelieving in my self
Insecure flows through my heart
Uneasy mind settles
Sorrowful waterfall
Heavy-hearted forest
sleepless stars
Passionless mountain range
Empty fields where nature once grew

* * *

Harmony

Author: Golden Sapphire

Life is too short
To hold grudges, hate, judgement on others.

Life is too short



Not to do your favorite things,
See something new or travel somewhere new.

Life is too short
Not to live your life.

Don't be scared of trying new things,
Everyone isn't perfect but
We all have a place on earth.
Don't be scared of life,
You were born for a reason.
God and Mother nature don't make mistakes
On anything or anyone.

We're all different but we're all unique,
Just like flowers.
Some have petals, others do not,
Some smell pretty, some do not,
Some have mixed colors, while others do not.

If nature can live in Harmony, so can we.

* * *

Discover

Author: Golden Sapphire

Rediscover Love
When you lost them.
Never close yourself off



From feeling.
Rediscover Happiness
When nothing goes as planned.
Everything happens for a reason.
Rediscover Light
When darkness clouds your mind.
It doesn't stay long.
Rediscover your path
When you stray from it.
Make your own path you walk.
Rediscover your inner child,
When your adult self has to grow up.
Rediscover new and old

* * *

Unlock

Author: Golden Sapphire

Feeling less important
To those who lost their voice.
You never lost it
You just forgot you had it.
Feeling useless
Where nothing matters anymore.
It matters to those around you
To those who love and care about you.
Feeling passionless
Find that drive inside of you.
Only you can unlock your true self



Feeling down under the weather.
The storm will pass by
Just like time does.
Feeling like the world needs to change.
It does need to be changed
To expect others for who they are
Not the reflection from a camera,
Or who they want you to be.
Don't hide, push others away, hide your voice.
Those who love you, love you deeply
from family to friends

* * *

Forbidden love

Author: Golden Sapphire

Forbidden love
Between two who can not be together,
But love each other from a far.

Forbidden love
Is like the star cross lovers
Passed each other in the night sky
But can not touch one another.

Forbidden love
Wanting and needing one another
But can not have each other.



Forbidden love
Is like the ocean rejecting the land

* * *

Box

Author: Golden Sapphire

Closing my soul in a box
Shutting my heart away
From the world.
Shutting my voice off
When I don't need to talk.
Keeping my thoughts
To myself
Because the world isn't ready
For me.
The voices telling me to hold off,
Back off,
Don't do or say anything.
Just keep my head down low
With a hoodie on
So nobody can know
The voices are bad
The nightmares are worse.
Rather lay down in my coffin
Than face my destiny.
Rather give my soul to angel of death
Than face something that got picked



Before I was born.
Oh well, life is life
It doesn't come with a manual book.
It's what I'm always telling myself.

* * *

Obstacle course

Author: Golden Sapphire

Overcoming the obstacle course
Of my life.
Been feeling overwhelmed with everything and everyone
Around me.
Gotta push past my limitation.
Been down under.
I feel like I'm not good enough,
I feel like I'm losing my battle
To my mental illness.
Maybe I should lose to it.
Trying to overcome
The obstacle course of my nightmares
Trying to understand them and why I've been having them,
Since I was a little girl.

Different dreams end the same way.

* * *



Rethink

Author: Golden Sapphire

Everybody needs to think
About our future,
Before we lose our future.
Where there will be nothing left.
Everybody needs to think twice.
Before everything we worked for
Will be emptiness in darkness.
Hate crimes are in the past
Leave them in the past.
Wars don't belong in our future,
Our future is based on our actions.
Learn from the past, it's there to teach us,
Make a better future for our kids and their kids to live on
earth
After all, the future does belong to them

* * *

Hesitation

Author: Golden Sapphire

Hesitation surrounds my heart.
Wanting to lose my life,
Also wanting to live my life.
Being blinded by the crossroads
On my path.
Wanting The Lord to guide me,



Also wanting the Angel of Death take me.
Confusion roams my head,
Wanting answers, but not wanting to seek them.
Hesitation surrounds my mind,
Feeling like I'm losing to the battle.
Maybe I should lose to it,
Surrounded by darkness my whole life.
Only light I got to see was my own
I made deep within my heart and soul

* * *

Giving up

Author: Golden Sapphire

Wanting to give up
On life.
Wanting to put my all into it,
But also wanting to just disappear
Into the night.
It's okay
Because I just want to give up,
Give up on everything else.
Why not on my life?
I'm tired of thinking the same question.
Dreaming the same thing over
Those dreams become a nightmare...

Nightmare that will make you stay awake.

* * *



Forget also forgive

Author: Golden Sapphire

Wanting to forget but also forgive.
Forgetting how much pain
I carry inside.
Forgive myself for carrying the pain,
For so long.
Move on from my past
Move forward to my future.
Wanting to heal,
Wishing my scars would disappear,
On inside and outside.
Wanting to let go,
Wanting ocean waves
To carry me away

* * *

Why would anyone care?

Author: Golden Sapphire

When anxiety kicks in,
Suicidal thoughts go on over-drive.
Depression takes control,
Tortured by disbelieving in myself.
Destructive on my self-esteem.
Drained from being disconnected
By the outside world.
Hopeless unsettled thoughts



Spreading through my head,
Wanting to lay underground
To sleep with the angels peacefully.

Why would the world care if I sleep?
Why would the world care if
they lost
Me to angel of death?
Those are the questions running through my head
If I take it or I don't take it.
Why would anybody care if I sleep on the stars tonight
Or in the future?
Why would anybody care?!
If I ended my game early?!

* * *

Heart like glass

Author: Golden Sapphire

Having a heart like glass
Shattered into million pieces.
Stitch it, glue it, tap it, bind it, rebuild it,
It'll never be the same.

Having a heart like glass
That needs to be
Bulletproof shield
That can never be broken again.



Having a heart like glass
Makes you feel getting hurt again
Isn't worth opening up to new love.
Shutting emotions off
Isn't the answer.

Having a heart like glass
Makes you stronger.
Because brushing off bad emotions,
And allowing you to feel,

Is what strength does.

* * *

Stuck in Cross Fire

Author: Golden Sapphire

Many years, every country
Has been at war.
This will happen if
The world Leaders
Let wars go on.
Life will be lost,
young and old.
Angel of death will be happy,
Chaos will sweep across the lands.
Lord will turn his back on us,
Stop answering our prayers.



War on Ukraine needs to end,
World Leaders don't care
Who is in the cross fire.
If another land has what Leaders want,
They'll take it by force, they don't care.
China wants to push us past
Our boundaries.
We need to stand as one,
Before it's too late.
Before we lose what our past lives made.
We all live on the same planet,
We all have only one life,
We all trying to live
That one life we have.

Yes we are born with different skin color, different hair,
different eye color so much more. But we all have one thing in
common. We all have souls, thoughts we share, hearts to
love, we all feel pain, we all get scared, smile when we're
happy, cry when we're sad, get mad at stupid things, but we
also love and care. Having those things makes us human
beings. Makes us worth having a life to live. Don't be hateful
towards others on how they look, talk, walk, dress or act.
Show kindness towards them because they might be going
through a hard time too.

* * *



Wanting

Author: Golden Sapphire

What matters is:
Love will always love
Hate will always hate
Darkness is light
Light is darkness
Without the other
There is nothing but emptiness.

Being in love is different than
Loving.
Hating on others is different than
Getting to know them.

Wanting someone secretly
Is the poison fruit.
Wanting someone to understand
You for you.
Wanting someone to desire you from afar
Wanting them to want you
Wanting someone to take next step
Is wanting something more.
Wanting tears to be wiped away
Wanting to feel their body against
Yours
Wanting to see their smile
Wanting a life is wanting some thing more.



Being a child of the Lord
I am not allowed to seek
wealth, health or fame!

* * *

Healing is...

Author: Golden Sapphire

Healing isn't about the body and mind,
Healing is getting better, feeling better.
Getting up for a hike, walk the tree line.
Or just laying down on grass watching the stars.
Healing is about letting go of the past.
Move on towards the future.
Healing is about how far you have gone.
Healing is about the travel
You've made in your life.
Healing is pushing past it all,
Standing on the ground.
Be proud of how much you've
Overcome.
Be proud of how much
You'll go on your path.
Healing is about letting go
The person you once knew.
When you see yourself,
Remind yourself,
Healing is understanding.



Healing is part of the process.
Whether it slow heal or fast heal.
You're still healing from something,
Mental or physical.
It's still a healing process.
It can take months or years.
Your still healing...
Like me!
I'm still healing mentally,
Wanting to kill myself daily.
Not wanting anybody to save me.
It'll only be my fault
Because my mental state
Told me how I feel!
Nobody doesn't care
Nobody can understand

* * *

Everyone around me

Author: Golden Sapphire

Everyone around me
Either lies to my face or
Uses me for personal gain.
Everyone around me
Either wants to be me



Or be with me.

Everyone around me
Copies me in some way.
Whether it's how I dress
Or how I talk.

I keep telling myself
It's my soul and heart
That makes me the
Type of person I am.
Wrapping my head
Around thoughts.
I keep telling myself
Being myself is the only thing
I know how to do.

Living in darkness my whole life,
Giving my own light,
Sharing that light with others
Who need it more
Than me.

* * *

Leave me in a puzzle hole

Author: Golden Sapphire

Having a mind like a puzzle
Trying to put back the pieces.



Some go in the wrong area
Some disappear in thin air.
Darkness swallows my soul and mind
Not scared of dark, being scared
What hides in darkness.

Wanting to hurt or kill myself
For angel of death to take my soul.
Put it back in the earth core,
Wanting God to answer me.
Tired of asking myself why! God put me here
In this life time.
Does he want to punish me
for my past lives?
I have prayed for answers
I have wished to be born
Someone else, somewhere else.
I have wished to be born normal
Yet I still see things, feel their presence,
Hear their cries.

Confusion surrounds me
What does he want me to see?
What does he want me to feel?
I love mother nature and her animals,
I love the stars and planets,
I love that we're still learning to co-exist together.
Going crazy was bound to happen
To me.



Staying up due to nightmares
Barely eating
Barely realizing the reality
Of the end game.
Death wanting me since birth,
God chose my destiny before I was born.
Mother nature
Is watching me with watchful eyes.
Going down my path
Is pure darkness, shadows lurking,
Sharp rocks on my mountain
To make sure I am a fighter.
I don't blame God
I don't blame Goddess
I don't blame mother nature.
I just don't understand
I just can't see why!
He picked me...
To God I am both;
Darkness and lightness.
Lost but found
Guided but stray
Being in love but also loving
Others.

* * *



That one person...

Author: Golden Sapphire

That one person in your life
Walked in either at the right moment
Or wrong moment.

That one person in your life
Makes you see the person
Who you're hiding from.

That one person in your life
Makes you better or worse.
Doesn't mean you're actually a bad person.
Getting lost on the ride to recover
Doesn't mean you've found what you've been looking for.

That one person is in your life
Walked in for a reason
To guide you, help you get back up.

Don't be scared of the fail or fall
Get back up try and try again
Until you're happy...

I'm used to pushing everyone away
Until I needed them the most.
When that time came
God brought someone in my life



Who can help and guide me
Who can understand my thoughts and voice.
Darkness is my home, but so is the light
Stars are my path in the night sky.
The Lord is my heavenly father
Mother nature is my kingdom
To dance freely and sing their songs.
Wanting to let go of him
Knowing we do not belong together
Wanting to let go of the idea of him
Knowing he does not want me
Wanting to let go of it all
Does bother me but,
Doesn't bother him

* * *

Learning

Author: Golden Sapphire

Hiding my feelings
Isn't hiding the lie.
I've been telling my self
Fighting darkness.
I hold deep inside myself
Trying to let the light out.
Trying to control
My nightmares
Only made them worse.



Escaping into the dream realm
Where I feel safe far away
From angel of death!
Sandman, dream keeper
Welcomes me with open arms,
He as a guardian of all dreams.
Teaching me take control
Teaching me about my destiny,
Being my teacher.

* * *

Just be you

Author: Golden Sapphire

Working in a hard environment
Is difficult.
Meeting nice friendly people daily,
Than dealing with creepy creepo
Trying to creep up on me,
Either getting too close or putting hands on me.
Being a nice kind-hearted person
Is hard.
Always smiling seeing the best in others
Always having a voice to used
When necessary.
But when someone
Sneaks up on you, standing too close to you
Is hard to handle for anybody.



I tried to keep my distance
Because I like my personal space.
I can barely be near anybody
Without feeling their energy.
If they have negative vibes
I feel it.
If they have positive vibes
I feel it.
It's hard for me to understand.
Me as a person.
But also trying to
Understand them as a person.
Being one of a kind person
Is just that.
It's being one of a kind,
Nobody is you
Nobody out there is like you.
Being you is being special,
Don't let the world shape you
Don't let the world change you.

* * *

Protection

Author: Golden Sapphire

Protecting the ones you love
Isn't putting yourself in line of fire
To get hurt or killed
When you're protecting the ones you love



Isn't pulling out a weapon to hurt or kill.
Protecting your loved ones
Is pulling out a phone and calling,
Going inside your home and locking it.
Is protecting your loved ones.
I know. Because
I am one of the type of people
Who would put themselves in line of fire,
To protect the ones I love and care about.
But after dealing with dangerous people lately,
I end up walking away.
Turning my back on society,
Turning my back on the world.
No person, whoever they are, or might turn out to be,
In their future,
Should never ever threaten or take someone else life.
From a baby, through elder age.
No one deserves to face death,
No one should play angel of death,
That is what I call chicken shit
Right there.
We all are born to live our lives,
We all have to face death.
But being forced to face death
By another person's hands
Is a whole different story.
Don't threaten it, Don't take it, Don't think it.
Don't wish it, and most importantly,
Don't pray for it.



Death is not a game you want to play...
He wins every time.

* * *

Fighting

Author: Golden Sapphire

Fighting the pain,
Fighting the tears,
All I can do is fight.

I fight for my mental health,
A battle I won't lose
So I could watch my children
Grow up have a future of their own.

Fighting the breath I take
Fighting the voices I hear
I know they're inside my head
Pushing them back, coving my ears.
Telling me to kill myself
When I shouldn't.

I'm strong, sometimes weak, but strong
Life is too important throw away,
My feeling is I'm down under
Trying to live a life,
But too scared to.
Life is a plant,



Needs time to grow.
Needs water, sun and lots of love.
Mankind needs time to grow as well
Mistakes, learning is part of life.
Letting past go, moving on to the future
Growing into a better person.

Being paranoid deep down
Because I hear voices.
I think everyone and everything either wants me dead,
Out my of children's life
Or jail time.

It's because of the voices I hear
They're part of me now, I understand that.
Pushing them back is all I could do,
Being mental sick isn't a choice,
It chose me.

Being paralyzed inside my heart,
Feeling the numbness throughout my body,
Not wanting to take my own life, but also wanting to.

Deep down I learned to except the unexpected.

* * *



Secret

Author: Golden Sapphire

My deep dark little
Secret is that
I want to kill myself,
Want to end it.
My story is a quite one,
I pretend a smile,
So nobody can
See my pain the tears
I fight back.
Being strong takes a lot
Of energy,
It's easier to give up.
Burning energy, takes everything
I have to be strong,
Pretending everything is okay,
When it's not.
Rather cover my ears,
Hide in a corner
Not hear his words
Need to reject him,
Before he knows the
Truth.
Wanting to kill myself,
End the cycle,
Looking towards the ground
Not brave enough.



Live it

Author: Golden Sapphire

Giving up on humanity
Isn't giving up on love and kindness.
It's giving up on negative vibes
It's giving up on rudeness disrespectful.
Being a person
Isn't about feeling bad emotions,
It's also looking past it,
Telling someone they are doing
A good job.
Telling someone they need to breathe
Just take a break on life
Take in mother nature,
Watching the stars.
Being a person
Is just to live a life
You're born to have.
Let go all of self-pity, self-doubt
Regrets, Mistakes.

Just live it.

* * *



Done

Author: Erika Rae

Here I find myself alone yet again
Left with only my demons and addiction,
Left feeling like any thoughts of a different life
And or future is only pure fiction.

Day after day I hear the knocking from death at my door
And with each slow passing second
The question in my head on a constant reel plays,
Asking me exactly how much more?

My time left on earth, how much more can I take
And I'm really sick and tired of feeling
Like a fucking series of mistakes.

The guilt I feel is overwhelming
And the weight on my chest is unbearable,
Often stuck hoping and praying
That all of the damage I've caused is still repairable.

I miss being here, and I miss being present
Back to a time when some things felt pleasant.
Happiness, I have none,
And I don't remember the last time this shit was even
remotely fun.
So why the fuck is it so damn hard to throw it all away?
With steady breath inhale, then out



And with all you are, say:
"For good, I am DONE."

* * *

Life

Author: Pensir

What a fickle thing it is.
Who can you trust?
Who is telling lies?
Whose is the truth sayer?
Blood is blood.
You can always trust family. Right?
I was raised to never question or doubt.
I always had a problem with that,
But it still became a part of who I am.
Now I don't know who I am.
I broke away, then I came back.
There are now two versions of me
At war with myself.
Who can I trust?
Some stories don't line up
And don't make sense,
Then there is another story on the same topic
That does make sense to me.
Who is telling the truth?
Have I been misled, or deceived?
Who but God knows the truth of it all.
I have made my decision,



And I am paying dearly for it.
I choose proof and logic, understandable reasoning,
Over what blood tells me.
Am I wrong? Are they right?
Am I just a confused individual
Who is trying to do the best I can for my children?

* * *

Prey or Pray?

Author: Sri

Everyone has their own issues, addictions, demons, whatever you want to call them. I'm going to share a little part of myself here.

When I say NO to men and it hasn't been close to often enough, it's not because I'm wanting to test their skills at being persistent.

I already know that it's not love or heart-felt feelings for me that is causing them to pursue me.

How could it be? I can't even love me, yet. And I've even said I'm not looking for love, not this way.

If a man keeps begging me and subsequently I've come out of my protective self a little, he is then coming from a predatory place, because he is exploiting my vulnerability, my weakness, my traumatized self.

Watch a wild animal safari documentary where the predators wear down their prey to the point of exhaustion and finally the prey just surrenders because there's nothing left in them.



It is not love that is driving the collapse, and giving up of oneself.

I am kind to others.

I am giving to others.

I want everyone to feel good about themselves.

It seems that way, right?

But is it really?

I have to mute my body, my instincts, my higher knowing place, my inner voice, to give when I have already felt deeply and thus said NO.

My body is at this time at near collapse. And no, it's not fucking age.

It's a life and soul and spine crushing thing that I have allowed unknowingly, and sometimes knowingly to be done to me.

I told myself that it was love and care coming from these others.

Why not hurt myself, let myself be hurt in exchange?

In the end, I am alone, the predators going forward to new conquests or prey.

There is much more to this. But I'm not going to bear myself completely naked here.

This has been me and my experience up till now.

Not all has been bad. But enough of it has.

* * *



A Rumination on The Great Gatsby

Author: Sri

I watched the movie The Great Gatsby (see link above) and I thought maybe I would do a movie review of sorts and contribute it here. I think that more people will appreciate it here than they do in Facebook.

I don't know if religious indoctrination taught me to not trust myself, to not trust what is inside me. But regardless of how it occurred, when I look inside me I feel fear. I don't want to go into detail on that right now.

I am constantly searching, seeking, for a belief system or philosophy in life to imbibe, to follow, to indoctrinate myself with so I can have a clear path in life. And it has to be the right path. I don't want to come to the end and find out my whole life was erroneous.

I also have my feelers out, I'm not sure I would say my palms are cupped upwards to receive quite yet, they're more curled up in self-defense, self-preservation, hold onto whatever I can, mode. But I am open to confirmation or signs from the Universe. And today I saw the reward in that. I was feeling extremely dejected and pointless (it's really hard with all of this snow because I don't have the freedom to go outside and walk in nature to clear my head or change my mind) as I saw more snow falling from the sky and woke up in physical and emotional pain. But I got this impetus to walk to the mailbox



and check for mail. The biggest parcel in there was from Shasta Sovereign and it contained the 2nd volume of our writings and a lovely note, which counteracted the negative things I was feeling. And more love-filled items which told me that maybe I'm not getting love from the places and people I would expect to get it from but the universe has reached out to me and sent me this lovely confirmation that I am not forsaken or forgotten.

Other ways that the Universe might be talking to me is in random places like YouTube. Maybe it's nothing as cosmic as that. It could just be algorithms which some see as sinister. Nonetheless, I look for messages even there.

The 2013 movie *The Great Gatsby* showed up two nights ago and being a fan and long-time admirer of Leonardo DiCaprio I watched it. I got excited when the story told that he was born into poverty but that he imagined himself as so much more, 'the son of God'. I didn't take that to have any religious meaning but that he came from a place of power. He saw beyond his circumstances as dictated by his five senses.

This coming from a place of empowerment was taught by Neville Goddard, Napoleon Hill, Joseph Murphy, Paramahansa Yogananda, Uell Stanley Andersen, Wayne Dyer, Louise Hay, to name just a few, and now being presented to us by different YouTube coaches such as Joseph Rodrigues. And yes, I question all of this wisdom. I feel happy



with it, get on the path and then stop and start looking back or over to other paths. It's what I do. It drives me bonkers.

So, I'm watching this movie and feeling like, "Ok. This is cool." He created an extravagant life for himself through this process.

However, love came into it and he goes against what his seemingly higher, more powerful self guides him to do and throws his power away essentially. To quote the movie, "He knew his mind would never be free to romp like the mind of God; that falling in love would change his destiny forever." Because, it would appear, that when we live for others, for the hopes of having them reciprocate what our hearts feel for them, it is a huge gamble and it throws us out of that place of power into a place of worry, doubt and fear.

This is a big one for me to realize and have confirmed by this movie. So many of these YouTube coaches presenting these wisdoms use it to try to convince people that we can attain another person just as easily as attaining all of the other things people achieve in life. They go far as to say that other people are just us pushed out, they are reflections, they simply show us what we believe about ourselves. That is ok to a point. But they also say that other people in our lives do not have free will for we are making them do whatever they are doing. And that really rubs me the wrong way. And this movie touched right on that point but in a round about way. So the YouTube teachers say we can have a



specific person back in our lives even if they've moved on and gotten married to another. And there is so much to be said about that but I will attempt to write about the aspect of that that is addressed in the Great Gatsby.

Jay Gatsby wants the woman whom he fell in love with before he became fabulously wealthy. She has gone ahead and gotten married to someone else. Everything he does is for her, in hopes of her coming back to him. But his best friend, the only one who cares about him truly, the writer of Gatsby's story within the story, Nick Carraway, tells Gatsby, "You can't repeat the past." Gatsby disagrees with him, being the powerful person he is and the most hopeful person Nick has ever met.

His attempt to get her to go back to that place of love leads to tragedy and becomes his undoing (one could say). Was it because he thought he could attain her as he did all of the amazing luxury in his life but people do have free will? Was it because really she was undeserving of his love? People do change; she had changed in the five years since they had first been together. Nick even says to him in the only compliment he ever gave him and in saying goodbye to him, "They're a rotten crowd. You're worth the whole damn bunch put together."

Was it that if he was going to suspend all disbelief and overcome and disregard his undesirable past to become the new person that he did, that he had to leave even her, or that past version of her, in the past as well? Because I think this



might be what it is about and this is taught by the proponents of getting back a specific person. To achieve it we have to grow into new versions of ourselves where it is impossible to disbelieve in ourselves, where there is no doubt that we can have what and who we desire.

He did step visibly out of his power when he became desperate in trying to get her to proclaim she never loved her husband. He gave her all of his power then. And Leo's such a good actor that I could see him shrink on screen, his spirit dimming, when he was giving every human part of himself in trying to convince her and in defending his pride and integrity to her cruel husband.

Did he end up the loser in this tale? I can say, no, he didn't, for he died in love, hopeful to the very seemingly tragic end, while she continued on in a life of deceit and marital misery.

He remained steadfast to his intent, his truth, his heart's desire. As far as creating all the events in his life, the actions of others, including his tragic death, ugh, that's a wondering for another day.

In conclusion, I still feel drawn to the teachings of the wise ones who say to take responsibility for everything in our lives. That can mean simply being able to control how we respond to events. It can also mean not accepting anything as our fault yet taking responsibility for how we pick ourselves up (if necessary) and continue on in life.

This isn't really a movie review; more a rumination.



If it was easy, everyone would do it

Author: Taylor Gean

Usually I don't write, so bear with me here. I recently was asked what the best piece of advice someone had ever given me was and why.

The best piece of advice I have been given was: if it was easy everyone would do it. Why is it, because it quite literally pertains to everything in life. If life was easy, everyone would still be here, right? We wouldn't have self harm or suicide notes. Everyone would have a career and/or be working in their dream job. I recently listened to a poem someone wrote about how scalding hot showers were a form of self harm.

The poem went like this:

"I've been sitting in the shower again,
Knees to chest water hitting shins,
When I heard scalding hot showers
Could be a form of self harm,
I laughed with my whole body.
It's not funny just typical
Even in a crisis I'm boring
My therapist tells me I need to feel my feelings
I don't know what the fuck that means.
Everytime I try to feel like myself
I forget how to breathe.
Last week I warned her,
I said its probably nothing, but
I'm sitting in the shower again"



I never realized until that day that the showers I was taking were taking away my numbing feeling because life was throwing me down, time and time again...

It felt difficult to breathe hot shower, minor inconvenience in my life hot shower. Feeling like the world was spinning so fast that you couldn't stand without falling or crawling back into bed. I'd take a hot shower and feel kinda okay, but not really better.

I remember fights with my mom all too clearly and she'd tell me how I reminded her of my bio dad. This was the biggest insult, I never felt loved by her. I always felt a burden on her young life because she made the choice to have me. I always felt I was a reminder to her that my good-for-nothing bio father and the abuse she suffered. Her life wasn't easy, but neither was mine. But because her's wasn't easy, she took it out on me.

My relationships as an adult often turned ugly because I never knew how to be love or what love would feel like. So in turn, I slept with the dozens of people, thinking "Oh this is love." For them to ghost me in a day or two. I'd get over it and find the next person who would show me the smallest amount of attention. I'd fall head-over-heels to just be used. After a while, I had given up on trying to find someone until one day I met a boy who I fell for. He later turned around to be just like the bio father who'd beat me and then tell me "This will make



you better in the long run.” Or he'd tell me “well maybe if you loved me more, I wouldn't have to do this.” I often blame my mother for this relationship because I never knew what it would feel like to be loved.

Once again “if it was easy, everyone would do it.”

My teenage years growing up in special-ed often led to me being bullied, which, in combination with what was happening at home, led me to self harm. This wasn't just hot shower, this was suicide notes and leaving scars on my body where no one could see. Because it'd often be passed down as I was dramatic and just wanted it for attention. I couldn't turn to anyone for help because it makes it worse at home. I didn't start seeing a therapist until I graduated, and even he passed me off as being over dramatic and needy. So now, here we are, I'm still here world, who knows what it will throw at me next. At this point, I hate my job more than the last one. I came across my suicide notes that I wrote when I was a teenager that made me feel so selfish. In all reality, suicide isn't selfish, self harming isn't selfish, and asking for help is not selfish. Because if life was fucking easy, none of this would've happened to me. I wouldn't be feeling the pain that I do today if it wasn't for the pain I felt then. But here we are living the dream, so they say lol..

Remember, if it was easy, everyone would do it, no matter the situation...

* * *



Support your local search and rescue and get lost...

Author: Taylor Gean

From a young age I've loved being in the woods. From hiking at 8 days old though the redwood with my mom to white water rafting in Colorado with the girl who lived next door to my great grandparents. I can not remember a time where I was not happy in the woods. 2 years ago I took a hike through the black marble mountains, somewhere my grandpa always used to want to go.. He died of cancer before he could go. He taught me all about the forest and what it had to offer me. He used to go on outdoor field trips with me because he was able to teach me and others. I'll never forget the trip to Captain Jacks Stronghold, it's a national monument where the school planned a field trip to go. He got to sign me off the bus and we got milk shakes. We went and looked at the writing on the rock walls that had been fenced off because people don't know how to respect the land that was passed down.

He used to snowmobile and was a part of search and rescue. I'll never forget going to the fair for the first time after he was diagnosed. He used to stand at the gate checking hand stamps. We would always bring him food throughout the day. Then there was the first fair after he died, I couldn't help but feel drawn to the gate where he used to be at. I made my way over to be hugged and told how amazing my grandpa was like I didn't know how amazing he was all along.



Oh how he loved his jeep but would curse and say he'd never own another one when it had issues. It led me to wanting a jeep. He had passed and six months later I had gotten in a bad car. 6 months after that I bought a jeep, and just like him, I will never own another jeep because of how many issues it has.

I haven't been on an adventure in two years now since my hike through the black marble mountains. Oh how he would be upset. He knew I loved the woods from the time he met me and we would go "geo dorking" as him and my grandma would call it. They were always on an adventure together, always going to find somewhere cool. I plan to backpack out somewhere this summer because it's what he'd want me to do. Get out and explore, but don't you dare get lost because he won't be there to find me.

He used to wear these search and rescue shirts that said "support your local search and rescue and get lost". Each kid got a shirt that said that eventually it was my favorite shirt to wear when I worked in the sporting goods store. People got a kick out of it.

To think he passed before he could meet my future husband. I think he'd approve. From the time we got together, we were always going places but only once have we gone on a hike (unless you count the archery range as a hike lol). But I'm planning to drag this man into the woods to experience backpacking. My grandpa always knew about my dating life but he never got to know about this man. The person who



reminds me of him and my dad together, the one who tells me to chase my dreams no matter how insane they are. I believe my grandpa sent me this man when I needed him the most and here we are getting married. I'm sad he won't be at the end of the altar, but he'll be there in spirit walking beside us.

Not all who wander are lost-SARS

* * *

Gardeners Beware!

Author: David Henderson

If you're like me, this Spring weather and lots of sun has got you thinking about starting a beautiful garden. If you're also like me you typically amend your soil with some animal manure, or some form of compost. It's what I've done for years and it's what people have done to improve their soil since mankind first started planting seeds. Manure contains nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients that are key to good plant growth and development. Compost also adds nutrients and organic matter that helps to loosen the soil, making growing a breeze.

This is all wonderful, but your compost or manure could contain things that will absolutely destroy your garden, persistent herbicides that will inhibit the growth of your plants, causing their growth to be stunted, twisted and wrong.



These persistent herbicides are used to spray grazing lots and hay fields to stop the growth of weeds. The herbicides commonly use Aminopyralid to stop the growth of broad leaf plants, so grasses are unaffected, the name of the Aminopyralid herbicide used in the United States is Grazon.

Animals who feed on these fields or on Hay sprayed with Grazon pass the herbicide through their system, where it is left in manure. Even if this manure has been composted, the herbicide will not be fully decayed and can cause serious harm to your garden. I've read reports of Grazon contamination ruining gardens for years.

Now that you know the dangers of persistent herbicides, you might be wondering **"How do I avoid Grazon/Aminopyralid damage?"**, and I have a few tips for you.

First, if you get your manure from a local farmer or rancher ask them if they spray their fields with Grazon or feed their animals off of hay, if they say "Yes I use Grazon", do not use their manure, if they say "I don't know", take a small amount of the manure to be tested. You may want to avoid Horse manure entirely because they will often be fed hay that is sprayed with Grazon.

If you get your manure from the big box store, you may not be safe either. Last year I bought a few bags of composted manure and used it to amend my soil, all the tomato and pepper plants that I placed in the amended soil were twisted and stunted, I didn't get a single tomato or pepper to harvest



and now that I know what Grazon contamination looks like I'm almost certain that is what happened. I had purchased some peppers and tomatoes at the same nursery at the same time and given them to family, and those plants grew tall and strong with a bountiful harvest. The only difference was the soil that I used, soil that I amended with manure. You may want to test your manure from the big box store just to be sure.

If you use compost, be sure that you haven't added anything to it that may have been contaminated with Grazon, namely hay or animal manure. If you buy compost from the store, you may want to test it.

If you use Hay or Straw from the store as a mulch, it may have been sprayed with Grazon, especially if it says "Weed free" on the tag. If you get your hay from a farmer, be sure to ask him if he sprays his fields and what he sprays them with. You should always test your hay or straw for Grazon before using it.

You might be asking **"How exactly do I test for persistent herbicides?"** It's a simple yet somewhat time intensive process. What you'll want to do is perform a "Bioassay", which for this endeavor is incredibly simple. Grazon is known to affect Legumes and Nightshades greatly, so what we'll be doing is planting some peas and beans in a mixture of the compost or manure you want to test and some garden soil, peat moss or coco coir. You should do a control group in just the seed starting mix without any manure so you can compare the growth of the plants. You'll want to wait until



your peas and beans sprout and show their first “true leaves”, if these leaves are small, cupped and twisted while the controls are not, you can be pretty sure that the manure or compost is contaminated with herbicides and you should not use it. Another way of doing this is to purchase tomato plants from a store or nursery, plant one in regular soil and one in soil mixed with manure or compost. You’ll have to wait until the tomato starts showing new growth and compare it to the new growth on the control tomato, as the herbicide seems to only affect new growth. If the new growth on the plant is twisted, cupped or the plant is stunted in comparison to the control tomato, then you can be sure that the manure or compost shouldn’t be used. One thing to note is that over or under watering can cause cupped leaves, make sure you’re not over or under watering.

As for testing Hay/Straw for persistent herbicides you’ll want to make a “tea” from the hay or straw and let it steep for a day or two. Have two tomato, bean or pea plants ready. Water only one plant with the “tea”, and water one with regular water. Make sure to label which plant is which. Observe any new growth for deformities.

If you run into any contaminated manure, compost or even garden soil from the big box stores, be absolutely sure to call and complain about the issue to both the store that sells it and the brand that you bought. Also be sure to tell your friends about the issue, the more people that know, the better. Remember, it happened to me and many others, it can



happen to you, it's better to run a few simple tests than it is to lose a whole garden. If you want more information on the subject just search "Grazon Aminopyralid contamination". Aminopyralid isn't the only herbicide to be aware of, but it is one of the most prevalent.

* * *

Love hurts

Author: Sissy

How can you love someone so much who still hurts you, over and over, time after time? I have been with this man for 30 years of my life. I have three beautiful kids with this man, who has hurt me.

The first time was when I was five months pregnant with our first child. I found a letter in his closet and I asked him who the letter was from. He told me it was from his mother in Mexico. I took the letter to a friend of mine to translate into English. It was then I found out he was married in Mexico and that she will be coming to the United States. I had no clue he was married in Mexico at the age of 16. After I had our son in 1993, he told me he had to go to Mexico because there was stuff going on here in the United States that he couldn't fix. The night he left, a friend (of both mine and his) took him to the bus station.

The second time he has hurt me. Later that day my friend comes over after taking him to the bus station. She says,



“Well, how do I say this without hurting my best friend?” She tells me that the lady who came with my sister-in-law to see my son was my man’s wife. When my friend and man got to the bus station, she was there and was leaving with him. Eight months go by without a word or even a letter from the man that keeps on hurting me. I finally try to move on with my life and my son. Well, that didn’t work out too well for me. His cousin’s wife saw me at my aunt’s house and tells me that he is back in town! I was so scared, nervous; I didn’t know what to do. I was walking home one day past where he was hanging with his friends. I just kept walking and the next thing I hear is this voice saying my name. All I could do was stop in my tracks and start to shake. He said “I want to see my son.” I told him “Now you want to see him?” So that night, he came to my parents’ house to see his son. That is when he tells me “I’m sorry.”

Then I take him back after all that he has done to me. Eight to nine months go by and he tells me that he has another son (their first) in 1994 with his wife who he “doesn’t want to be with.” Yes, I gave him another chance to change. We ended up having a rocky relationship, breaking up and getting back together. That is when we ended up having our second son in 1995. We ended up staying together. I was the young naïve girl who stays with a man who has cheated on her so many times. To find out again he had a second son with his wife who was born 1996! Yep, I forgave him again. He tells me, “Let’s go and get married in Reno.” Stupid me, I said “ok.” So we went and got married (even though I knew it was not



legal). We stayed married for seven years and had, yep, another baby in 2003, finally a girl. I was so happy that I had his first daughter.

But then he left to Mexico again. And to find out he took his wife and their youngest son with them. So why he was in Mexico with his wife?! I finally made up my mind that if he can do this to me and to her like it's nothing, then he doesn't truly love me. I find out again that he and his wife are having another baby, yep, again to top it off, she ended up having a baby girl in 2005.

My man had two sons and a daughter with both me and his first wife, total of six children. This is when you know that love hurts; when you go through all this shit and still stay with him. He still does what he does with both of us. I still love this man and I don't know how I can stay with someone who keeps hurting me. I have dealt with this for so long that I don't know how I still love this man. That's how I know love hurts.

Part Two

Yep there is more. I decided to stay with this man and find out that he has been living with me and supporting me and still having sex with her. Years go by to find out that he had sex in our house, in our bed not once but twice that I know of! There is not a day that goes by that I don't feel sad and depressed. There are times that I sit and think "Why am I still with you?!"



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