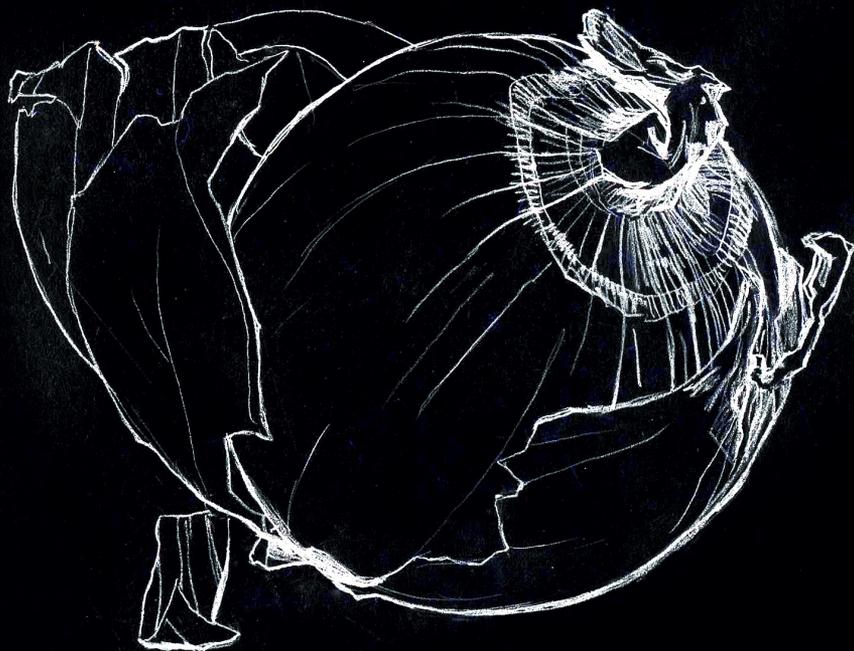


**THE PUBLIC JOURNAL.**









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---

EDITOR'S LETTER

Holla, Public!

Sometimes, people are like onions. They have layers. They make you cry. They add flavor to your life. They make your breath smell bad. This simile is falling apart pretty quickly.

What we mean to say is, people are complicated, and it's often the ones that look smooth and whole on the outside that are hiding the greatest insecurities and the most jagged scars. What you see is far from what you get. Our issue this spring reflects the secrets we hide within our oniony layers. The fears that we keep under wraps. The judgments we pass that then lead us to judge ourselves. The hopes we can't say out loud because to speak them would be to admit how badly we want them to come true. The regrets we try not to dwell on.

We want everyone to think that we're perfect. Unburdened, unmarked, unbroken. But in the end, all this pretending just leaves a bad taste in our mouths. So unravel yourself and let some of your layers see the light. You're allowed to have problems; you're allowed to be unhappy. In order to learn from your pain, you first have to embrace it. Even if that embrace is a stranglehold or a Vulcan nerve pinch.

— Lillian and Anji

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Spring 2012

## TENDERHEARTED

Sometimes, I worry for the squirrels.

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## WORD CHOICE

My ex has a new girlfriend. I'm not happy for him, but I am glad for him. There's a difference, I swear! I guess, it's like his happiness no longer affects my happiness, which is why I shy away from saying I'm happy he's happy. Instead, I feel like he deserves to be happy, so I'm glad he's happy, it just doesn't really make me feel anything personally. Does that make sense? I'm not bitter, I'm just trying to be honest.

---

GIFT OF GAB

I just had the most amazing conversation tonight with some hilariously clever people. And it hit me that I will probably never have a conversation like this once I graduate. This makes me sadder than I have been in a while.

---

## EVASIVE MANEUVERS

I avoid going home because I think my friends will hate the person I've become.

---

## GAG REFLEX

I know I told you I still wanna be friends, but I actually throw up a little every single time I see you now.

---

## TWO-FACED

My roommate is sometimes so selfish and passive aggressive I feel like I might hate her. And then she does something so sweet and thoughtful for me that I feel bad that I thought I might hate her.

## BUTT QUAKE

Whenever I wear leggings I wonder if anyone can see my  
asscheeks jiggle like how I can feel them jiggling.

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## ACTUALLY TITLED "FUCK"

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This journal entry, actually titled "fuck," I did not discover until several days after writing it. I was well past blackout. I'm not musical at all and couldn't even figure out what that chord progression was until playing it on a piano. It is Pink Floyd's "In the Flesh." How I was able to write it while blackout is an eternal mystery.

Fuck:

seed the confusion. Death and democracy. CDC B AG DC.  
Hammer

---

## BEING MERRY AND LOOSE

---

I feel lonely again. Here I am, sitting in a restaurant for dinner. Maybe I just need to forget myself and my sensibilities. People are talking in the Pantheon. They are bothering the street performers, aping them and getting in their faces, and posing the obelisk in St. Peter's Basilica as a penis in pictures.

What is beautiful? Love is beautiful, passion is beautiful. I am afraid I will never experience them, tender embraces in the darkness, laying the starlight feeling close to someone, not needing the distant intrusion of words: sharing oneself fully with another.

I am afraid I will never: Pouring life into work, letting yourself be taken away by the emotions of the art, becoming both subservient and elevated greater than yourself alone, by serving such a purpose.

I am embarrassed by this behavior. The talking, the pestering of the performers, the sacrilege (it doesn't matter that I'm an atheist). It is crass, rude, and disrespectful. At the same time all these others are laughing and joking, being merry and loose. I feel unable to properly mix in and socialize, pathologically so.

## ALARM

One time, the fire alarm went off when I was taking a huge shit.

## GRIN AND BEAR IT

I want to stab my hallmates in the eye. We go out together every weekend.

---

## SIMPLE PLEASURES

I want simple things. I want sunshine, greenness, a warm hug from someone who cares, something to smile about, somewhere to read, a cup of tea. But sometimes I almost give it all away to try to be wealthy and powerful and sexy because I know that these are the things I'm supposed to want. I'm supposed to want that right?

I lost a lot of dead weight a few weeks ago. Said weight was my ex-girlfriend, who had the maturity, attention span, and voice of a toddler. But that's not my point today.

With my newfound free time, I had two choices. I could start taking academia seriously, or I could pick up a fourth hobby. Naturally, I set out looking for a new timesink.

I picked up people watching.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not an idle person. I jump from class to rehearsal to personal projects like many of this school's high-strung minions. But without a certain level of distraction, I go nuts. And that's no fun for anyone.

People watching has provided moments as absurd as any comic or game I've ever purchased. I've watched a grown couple get into a shouting match over the last piece of candy. I'd say the girl won, but no one really wins that conversation. I've also noticed far more stealing in the last two months. The honor code seems to keep you guys from stealing words, but you're a bit more liberal with the University Store.

The Ivy League heist seems to have three steps. First, the agent makes a fake arc around the store in question. Then there's the crisis of conscience. This will involve a lot of glances at the ceiling or one's shoes. After finding their nerve, the stealthy tiger will make a "casual" pass by their target followed by a bee line exit. Not exactly subtle.

## STRANGER

I love making observations that might make me look like I have Asperger's to strangers.

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## SELF-CONTROL

I want you to totally control and dominate me but the feminist in me is afraid to let a man control me.

---

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

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Every time I meet a new girl I think about how she would look in bondage cuffs.

---

## BROKEN BRAIN

There seems to be something wrong with me. For example, as I was walking through Frist a few days ago, I was for some reason bemused by the people who were eating late meal alone there. That might have been me once maybe. Then, something wonderful caught my attention: a tray with a plate of broccoli, rice, and a nice piece of chicken cordon bleu. The perfect dinner for a sad, healthy sap. I was completely transfixed by the chicken cordon bleu. It was just about the size of my fist. I had an overwhelming urge to pick it up and squeeze it a bit before throwing it on the floor and watching it fracture wetly, like a cheesy, spongy orgasm. It would be beautiful, but not as ultimately lovely as the confusion and sadness that the poor kid would feel upon coming back from getting a napkin. He would look around, trying to understand my motives as I stood there laughing. Maybe he would attack me or yell at me or perhaps he would be too afraid of this misanthrope. Either way though, he would have rice and broccoli for dinner. I didn't do it of course, but as I passed by the unguarded plate, my efforts to suppress a large toothy smile were futile.

---

## ESCAPE ARTIST

Sometimes I wish I could run away from here and go to art school.

---

MOVED

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I'm not usually an emotional person, but saying goodbye to my zee group at the end of last year was harder than saying goodbye to my family before coming to college.

---

## CONFESSIONS

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- 18 and OVERDOSED
- I don't know why things that make other people happy don't make me happy
- I like to play Beyoncé when I shower
- I don't know if I want what I can't have, or don't want what I can have
- Even at a place like Princeton I am embarrassed about my wealthy background
- I complain about being single, but at least 80% of the time, I don't CARE
- I wish my friends here were true
- I hate my freshman seminar but it's an easy A.
- So many people so alone (or not)
- Sometimes I feel like I'm leading people on and I like it
- In my free time I do more homework! FOR FUN!
- The cow hat has returned. It's back, baby.
- I wish I knew how to sing
- I can't fall asleep without wearing my retainer
- I like having only one friend I tell everything to
- I like animals more than people
- Actually I just love sunshine
- I hate grade deflations
- I'm counting down the days until I don't have to live with one of my roommates anymore.

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## THE GOAL

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Sometimes I wonder whether the goal of happiness is to change the world to your liking, or just to stop caring about the things you can't change.

---

ONCE

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Once, I lied and told a boy I liked that I was molested as a kid to get his sympathy. We've now been dating for four years.

---

## A WRINKLE IN TIME

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I don't know how time keeps slipping away from me so quickly. It's pretty freaky sometimes. I know everybody probably thinks that... but it really is freaky.

---

## PRODUCTIVE PROCRASTINATION

Instead of working on my homework I spent four hours watching my new favorite show. And I hated myself for it.

---

## SILVER LINING

Some days I feel surrounded by euphoria and hope, but it disappears quickly in deep despair and worry for the future. Despite the incessant cloud of depression and hopelessness, somehow there still exists the light within me that perhaps there will be a better future.

---

A SEQUENCE OF WORDS

Frost on my windowpanes,  
Fée d'absinthe.  
Do you remember the first time we met?  
Fear of looking into the soul was absent.  
How did it happen?  
Was I not interesting enough?  
I tried in my subtle way,  
Too little and too much in the wrong order.  
You could say you changed me;  
I don't believe that though.  
How do years seems so short,  
And days seem so long?  
It's always been like that I suppose,  
But I didn't used to wait for the days to end.  
I didn't used to hate the passage of years.  
What happened to your absence?  
Was it muted by my oversexed pacification?  
What about the future?  
Does it hold us together or apart?

---

## USED UP

I'm realizing that I have a problem with throwing things away, or rather wasting things. If I get a plate piled with food and the food stops being good and eating becomes a painful chore, I will continue to shovel food into my mouth until the plate is empty. When a cigarette stops being enjoyable, every puff hurting my throat and upsetting my stomach, I'll keep smoking until the filter starts to burn. With my old relationship, I couldn't end it until it was completely dead, used up by my emotional detachment and hurtful actions. I willed it to die because I couldn't throw it away until it was a husk. It's a problem--I don't know if I'm a glutton or a saver. Most of the time, though, I just feel sick. That's always the end result: disgust.

## AN EARLY START

Sometimes that coffee thermos I'm drinking out of in lecture isn't filled with coffee, but vodka and redbull.

## WELL-BEING

Trying to get through the school year while healthy...possible?

---

## A MOST EXCELLENT DAY

Today was a most excellent day. The sun shone brightly for the first time in a long time and I successfully cloned DNA from a South African gold mine.

---

## ANATOMY LESSON

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I wonder where dignity is stored, because I've just had a huge bite taken out of mine, and I can't stop thinking about what part of my body hurts the most. Like, when your love is rejected, your heart hurts. And when you're nervous, your stomach hurts. But which body part stores dignity? It feels like it might be somewhere in the chest region, not as localized in the heart as love, but sort of all around the rib cage. And maybe in the throat; mine feels a little tender. I think I might be depressed. I've been sleeping a lot. It's funny how the loss of dignity makes you heavier, not lighter.

---

## SCARRED

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I feel scarred from the events of last year, and I don't know how get my self-esteem back. Who do I talk to?

I have two friends and one of them is a girl and one of them is a boy. In a romcom version of this, I would be the person in the middle who tries to work things out between these people, who isn't that good looking and is just kind of disgruntled. This would be good practice if you were a journalist. Are you writing this down? This? This? Ok. Oh yeah, so I have these two friends. Both of them are very horny creatures. Well, no, actually one of them I can't imagine him having a penis. He's just very fluffy. Not like fat fluffy, just fluffy. He probably didn't get any attention from girls until college. Anyway, him and my friend have gotten physical a couple of times, and I guess they get very awkward in between because their expectations don't match up. But they do, they assume that the other person wants a serious relationship while they just wanna get laid, but actually they both want to get laid. But actually I dunno, you know oxytocin and hormones and wanting babies and stuff. I love the way you say "so." Where was I? Oh yeah, she's like call me and talk to me about him and my problems. And then last night he came to me and was like OMG, I think she wants a relationship, but she's very demanding and I have friends that I want to see. But it's true she comes up to me all the time and is like I think he hates me now and it's just frustrating to be all the time like no he doesn't hate you, no you're totally pretty, and I mean if she thinks that she's fat and ugly she must think I'm a beluga that she adopted. I don't do well with needy people because I'm needy except when I'm friends with needy people I usually put away my needy. I'm like a giving tree cuz like yeah I like give and I'm like come live in my trunk (but not that kind of trunk that's sketchy). I'm like yeah come pick my leaves eat my apples. Sorry I keep talking so fast wait where was I? No one is going to read this. I always skip all the long ones in the Public Journal. No go ahead write that. Yeah so I am just constantly dealing with both sides of this 6th grade arrangement, but it's 6th grade and you could possibly get pregnant, which I guess isn't that far from some people's 6th grade experience. But like I have to go to my room and make a phone call to my friend and have a conference call about this like it's my fucking job and I'm like I should be charging cuz god knows I can't afford therapy for myself I feel like I should be charging for being a couple's therapist or something. But

anyway it would be nice if someone asked me how I was doing and sincerely cared about the answer. I was dating someone earlier this year. Sorry where was I? I was dating someone earlier this year and I just...serious giving tree. We weren't even really dating. It's complicated. I feel like my life has a lot of parentheses like sorry I have to explain this there's a freaking addendum to everything there's always like a corollary. And like they were upset and I would come over with cookies and sit in bed with them and talk and that kind of stuff if they were sad I was fucking there if they were stressed out I would talk them through what they needed to do, take them through stuff one thing at a time and then when I needed something once they said they were going to go out and find people to party with. Alone. And just like I saw them the other night and I was stressed out and they were like how are you and I said you know I'm stressed out I have this huge thing due and they zoned out and they just stopped listening and I was just like sorry for boring you. And it's just like that kind of thing all the time where my friends are just like you're so funny you should be a comedian. One of my friends said when they thought of me they thought of sunshine...which is so sweet...but like it feels like I don't have permission to be sad. Sorry, this got really sad. Wow, this is so sad. I don't know how I can recover from this. I have to come up with something clever. I need an exiting joke. Oh, how many white people does it take to screw in a light bulb? Wait I shouldn't end with a race joke. Ok. In case anyone's curious, it's one to call the electrician and one to make the martinis. No, it shouldn't end on the white person racist joke.

## REUNION

I had a few imaginary friends. We decided not to see each other again til I'm 40.

## EXHIBITION

I always feel torn between feeling incredibly embarrassed when I get hickeys and wanting people to notice that I'm getting some!

## MIXED MESSAGES

As an antisocial male, how do I advocate against the objectification of women? Fuck dem hoes

---

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH

A stranger walked by me today, and was like, “Hey, that’s a beautiful dress, you’re a beautiful girl, if you’re not 12.” You can just say anything to strangers.

---

NATURAL WONDER

Sometimes it astounds me that all women have boobs.

---

## LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

Just some thoughts I jotted down while I was rolling last night:

- Bubbles in a fly's eye.
- The mural looks like blood splatters, so violent. Looks like a massacre, a fucking massacre and orgy. Creation and destruction. People birthing babies and then killing those babies and birthing more babies, who kill them. Creation and destruction; that is the way of life and death and life.
- How do I feel about Pluto not being a planet? Let me tell you son, Pluto is the God of death. And you think that by denying that Pluto is a planet that you control death. Bro'sup spliffcity, you cannot deny that Pluto is a planet just like you cannot deny that death is here and death is here to stay.
- I thought we were all racially blind here. Oh no, we aren't racially blind, we're racially color blind. We don't see red or green people. They might as well be white.

---

SLOBS

I judge EVERYONE in my hallway for the mess they leave in the bathroom.

## BIASES

I base my opinions on every other girl based on how fat or skinny she is.

## ODOROUS

I can't stop smelling my feet. Even after I shower, they kind of stink. I keep rubbing my fingers over my toes and smelling them!

---

## SELF-AWARE

So many issues! How to deal? That girl that sits at social events quietly and glumly in the corner? Yup. That's me.

---

## LUDDITE

I only go on Facebook if I have a lot of work to do. Otherwise, I'm totally fine ignoring my online life. Sometimes I feel like an old geezer because I don't use Facebook properly. I feel more awkward online than I do in person. Does that make me normal nowadays?

---

## PRE-FROSH PREOCCUPATIONS

- Can't ride a bike
- Today I got lost on four separate occasions
- I'm afraid everyone is smarter than me!
- I <3 pton!
- I miss him
- I think I'm going to Yale—but I realize what I'm giving up and it's killing me.
- I'm actually shy
- I wish I could be more unique sometimes
- Sometimes...I pretend I'm pretty
- I'm not going to Princeton
- I'm so impressed by this university and I think I'll love it a lot. I'm excited to attend. But in the back of my mind I can't escape how pretentious it still feels, and can't help desiring to undermine that pretension
- I'm really scared of having roommates in college because then I can't fart aloud
- I wish I had figured it out sooner
- I like pies
- I care too much about what other people think
- I am so excited to go to Princeton!
- I secretly stalk DiSiac on YouTube and found out the name of one of the dancers (who's amazing). No shame.
- I am scared to death about school!
- I do things in sets of three. When I don't I feel like something will happen. I hope it isn't OCD.

## EVOLUTION

I want to be unique, and change. I am afraid when people change, I hate that they are not the same person I knew.

---

OPEN-ENDED

Leading a life of complete indulgence of the mind. Should that correspond to a life of complete indulgence in actions? If not, what does it mean?

---

## CHICKEN

My roommate and I are playing chicken. Neither of us has said a word, but we both refuse to be the one to clean the bathroom. This has gone on since October. I think he's about to crack.

---

SECRET IDENTITY

What I want more than anything is to get married and have children, not to go to medical school and do research, like I tell everyone.

## OBLIGATIONS

I hope to follow my dreams and travel the world, though I fear I may pass it up in exchange for the financial security of me and my family.

LAPSED

I no longer feel very guilty about violating my religion.

---

## DETOUR

Sometimes, I'll take the long way to my room because it means I'll get to walk past your dorm. I'll hold my breath as I'm walking towards the courtyard where you always smoke and I'll let it out when I see that you're not there.

---

## CHANGE OF PLANS

I just got rejected by a language program that is to be held in my absolute favorite country. I can't stop crying.

---

CLARITY

I hate that it took me so long to figure it out.

Now, more than ever, I wish I could turn back time and be with you like I know i was supposed to.

I wish I could have let us be happy.  
I wish there was still an us at all.

I think I've gone blind from the burn of hindsight.

---

## CLOSURE

I'm beginning to see that what I really want isn't you, or your dick, or the after-sex cigarette I bum from you. What I really want is an explanation for why you dumped me. My fantasies about you never get past the explanation, they never go to the tiny single you live in, or to your bed with the messy sheets, or to you going into me. I thought for so long that I wanted you back for the sex, and maybe even for the conversation, but I only want you back for long enough to find out why you ended us in the first place, and then to have the strength and the coldness to end it again, this time on my terms. I do also miss your dick, though, if I'm being perfectly honest.

IF THE DEAD COULD TALK

I've hooked up with someone in a cemetery.

## OVERDOSE

Sometimes I drink so much coffee I feel like I'm having a heart attack.

---

DISEMBODIED

Know no sleep, feel no fatigue.  
Know no food, feel no hunger.  
Know no pleasure, feel no suffering.  
I am become my thesis.

INGRAINED

I hate fat and ugly people. No exceptions. Ever.

DISCOVERY

I kissed a girl...and I really liked it.

---

YOU, ME, AND A DEAD HORSE

When I began to love you, it was as if I grew a second head, as if I was parading around this beautiful white horse, gallant and muscular.

And I confessed I loved you.

It was such a wonderful sensation; I was so fragile—a flawed fishbowl bulging at its edge with clear cleansing fluid.

And you, insensitive to so many things—your own beauty, your own cruel charm, my utter rage and thirst, pulled out a sword and stabbed the horse.

Now I'm pitiful mirth: a fine ice cube with a trapped feather on a hot stone.

Now it is you, me and a dead horse.

---

## WISHFUL THINKING

I wish I was in love so much that I can feel it happening, but I don't know who with. Can you be in love with an image?

---

TOUCHING ME, TOUCHING YOU

I masturbated about my friend's girlfriend the other day (I'm a girl).

---

I THINK, THEREFORE I AM

Most nights I stay up well past when I lose efficiency—it's the only way I feel like I'm trying. (Permission granted to reword more intelligibly)

---

GOLDEN BOY

1/24/10

Hey Mr. and Mrs. VB,

I hope the move to the new place is going well and that this message finds you calm and well rested. My thoughts between finals have been in Utah for the past few weeks. Sometimes I wake up and get to breakfast before realizing that hearing this news wasn't just a dream. Also, I think I'm addicted to your excellent updates: keep 'em coming! Anyways, you can read him this story, if you'd like.

It was New Year's Eve 2009-10. M brought up a particularly embarrassing story from 6th grade. We were carpooling to what must have been one of the first middle school dances. I had brought a cheap bracelet to give to a girl I was crushing on. I handed it off and ran away, not really comprehending the idea of dancing. It was so embarrassingly awkward, that we just didn't talk about it. Not once in 8 years. That's why I was absolutely horrified when M brought this story up at New Year's. Everyone was supposed to forget about that! Of course, he was having the time of his life, recalling it and laughing so hard. I got him back with the time he had chapped lips and asked Mrs. B if she had any "gasoline." Oh, and we talked about making farting noises with our hands on the school bus and lunches with Mr. G. We talked about the time we got busted by the cops while trailer hitch sledding with Mr. VB, and about that graduation party. It was an epic reminiscing session. It got me thinking that M and I have been through a lot of the same stuff. It seems that he was always there, ever since the first day we got on the kindergarten bus...

It also seems that M was just a little better at everything we did. I mean, lower school PE, running the mile, snowboarding, paintball, tubing, soccer, I could go on—the things I loved to do in grade school. He was always the best with grace, never inspiring bitterness, just admiration and gratefulness for the opportunity to play with him, like what I imagine an older brother would be like.

That's why I can't quite come to terms with what's going on, can't quite imagine him in bed with machines breathing for him. But it's also why I know that he can pull through. I truly believe that the good old M that we all know and love is gonna come back out slowly but surely – perhaps a bit worse for the wear, but the maltreatment of college isn't exactly leaving the rest of us as bright eyed and bushy tailed as we were a year ago. Also, I can't imagine a better support team for him. If anybody has what it takes to face down moments that seem like eternities, it's you, Mr. and Mrs. VB. The rest of us will be behind you all the way. Although the time will be arduous, I'm confident that Team M will come out on top. I mean Team M always prevails because that kid is something spectacular.

Love,

~~~~~

1/14/11

In my dream he was still alive. His dad organized a massive water balloon fight in a labor of love. Everyone from the ancient world was there, carefree. M was his old self. One day everything will change again. A flock of birds will fly too close to trees, or a golden boy's brain will fertilize the snow. Then you'll send ones and zeros to a girl far away, hoping for ones and zeros back, but really hoping for her love back.

It's all wrong now. The fact of M's death has never been so nebulous in consciousness. The water balloon fight seemed to bring him back in time, bring us all back in time to when everything mattered, but no one cared. Now that nothing seems to matter, memory is hardly differentiable from a dream. I still sometimes wake up and dismiss it all as a bad dream, but mortality returns like kicked up dust settling. Absurdism, nihilism, they portray the senselessness; a kid doesn't give a damn about that stuff though. Life is lived in sacred childhood, the time when I did something more than sit around waiting to go insane. When your close friend from that memory is no more,

the death ripples back in time, jading the memories of his now bracketed being. Now I just miss him. That's the only non-bullshit that comes from my mind nowadays.

---

LOST AND FOUND

I'm nowhere near where I expected to be, but I've never been happier.

**THE PUBLIC  
JOURNAL.**

---

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Princeton's Public Journal is not the place for fiction, sparkling wit, or poetry; it is a whimsical megaphone for the secrets, desires, reflections and obsessions that we all repress and hide. A vehicle of intimacies, the *PJ* frees the writer and touches the reader. In an audacious and tender gesture, it invites the reassuring realization that we are not alone. With the exception of the occasional grammatical fix-up, *The Public Journal's* editors do not edit or in any way alter the anonymous submissions from students. Everything you read is real material from real students. So bring it on! Free yourself! Tell us all of those thoughts left unsaid, all of those wonderful, tragic and anxious moments of your lives so far.

---

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