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Budding Writers Contest 2021

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## A Letter Left Unsent (I Want to Tell You)

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Hey there,

There's so much I want to tell you. So much of me you have yet to learn, so much of me I want to share, so much that we both have yet to discover.

But I am unable to.

My head comes up with all the ways I can say the words; the prose, the phrasing, the diction. It comes up with the perfect times and locations to say what I want to say. And sometimes, I might even get it all lined up; I'm in the place and that time with the words and I open my mouth and – *nothing comes up*.

My tongue is cemented to the roof of my mouth, and suddenly, I am made of lead, heavy and drooping. Suddenly, there is a bundle of apprehension in my throat choking my words, strangling them to silence. And I sit in agony – it's just a few seconds yet it feels like years – where I sit, wide-eyed, unable to say anything.

I want to tell you that I am not okay.

I want to tell you how depression boggles me down, clouds my mind with nothingness. Self-doubt whispers in my ear and haunts my every move. Despondency makes my limbs feel like they are heavy weights that I can't lift up. It takes me down and down and down, and leaves me feeling so very lost and hopeless, standing on a tightrope that is perilously waving back and forth.

I want to tell you how I feel like an empty vessel most days.

I want to tell you how anxiety stretches me out, into a thin drum skin which may just puncture if you hit it too hard. Worry bundles tight in my gut, filling me with dread and anticipation for the world to end. Tension makes my head pound and throat sore and pulse thrum. I feel it everywhere, every single one of my fingers and toes, but it never speeds up. My pulse is very steady, yet it *resounds*, like ferocious waves crashing upon the shore, loud and roaring.

I want to share that part of my life, that part which has been kept so secretly yet affects me so publicly. I seek for you to understand why I am the way I am. I want you to know that I trust you with this information, but selfishly, most of all, I want you to know this, *so you know this*. So you realize that even though I don't have any particular reason to be depressed, *I am*. That I cannot get out of bed some days, that showering is a feat some days, that I can't hear you some days. I want you to know that it's normal. I want you not to treat me as if I were glass, but to be aware that sometimes I feel like I am. I want you to understand that *I can be depressed without a reason*. I want you to know that and I want you to validate it.

Selfishly, I want you to validate me.

I want to tell you that some days I cannot move. I want to tell you that some days, living is unbearable agony and some days it's pure joy. I want your support and your love and your care.

I want a pair of feet to walk alongside mine. I want a shoulder for me to lean on, a smile I can count on. I want to feel companionship. I want to not feel alone. But my stupid mouth and my stupid tongue and my stupid apprehension – all give me reasons why *I cannot tell you*.

I want that ball of jealousy in me to go away, the feeling which arises when I see someone else able to open up and talk about how they feel. I want the anger to fade, the anger which boils under my skin when someone just had a bad day, and they can get a hug while I've had a bad decade and I get a 'your life is great'. I want all my negative emotions to go away because they burn me through all the layers of my

epidermis. I want to scoop out all those unwanted thoughts from beneath my skin with my bare hands. If I could, I would. My hands would be stained red from the agony, green from the envy, blue from the heartache, and I would do it gladly.

I want to be happy for the people who can get what I don't, but it can be so hard. Because while I live vicariously through people and their happiness, I cannot be happy myself when I feel that it symbolises exactly what I could be if I got my damn mouth to work.

Sometimes I wonder why I cannot tell you. Maybe it's just nerves. Maybe I'm not ready to tell you. Maybe I think you aren't ready to hear. And some days, when I feel really bad, I think that maybe I just don't want you to hear it and then *not* give me what I so desire.

I know that what I want is too much. I know this.

I know that this letter will never be sent out to you or anyone else, because that's simply not the type of letter this is. This is a confession; one that will be sealed away and kept as a secret. And maybe it shouldn't be a burden, but it is borne like one, crushingly heavy as the weight of eth truth lies between my shoulder blades. I want the shame of being this way to disappear.

And you know, maybe someday this will be shared. Maybe one day I'll have the courage, or the world will change. But maybe this, like all my secrets, will only be unearthed long after there's any worth in knowing.

Ultimately, I just hope that things will one day be alright.

All the best, always,

Me