

## Dear Her, Dear Him, Dear Her

By Kasey Manche

Dear Her,

Each time I have sat down to write this letter.... My words fail. Each attempt has ended with a pile of crumpled letters, ripped to shreds because every word I utter... falls short.

Dear Her,

I don't know how to start. I'm scared even to write this because the anger inside of me is too visceral to be contained to paper....

Crumple. Toss.

Dear Her,

How dare you?! How dare you!? You are low, you are nothing, you are.....

Crumple. Toss.

Dear Her,

He was mine. He was the love of my life. You stole... you lied....

Crumple. Toss.

You can see how I am getting nowhere with this. But perhaps it shouldn't be eloquent. Perhaps it shouldn't be perfectly organized. The wreckage your actions left behind is just that....a wreckage. My anguish is not organized. My anger is not eloquent. My pain is not controlled.

The hardest part is watching you continue while I....

I am locked in a house, with only a window to the outside world. Inside the house is my grief, my shame, my pain, my life....ransacked and broken. Outside, the world moves on, still bustling with its usual busyness, unaware of the dark house on the corner.

I stare out the window, and there you are. Laughing, dancing... continuing. Unaware that you are the reason this one brightly lit home went dark. My fingers curl around the window pane in anger, wishing I could lock you inside this house. But your place is outside.... Dancing. My place is inside.... Grieving.

Dear Her,

I am angry. It is an anger that I never knew I had the capability to feel. It rages inside of me, threatening to collapse the already broken architecture of my heart. OUT. I have to get it out. There must be a way to burst through this locked window, and force this storm to overtake you.

Force you to feel the hurricane of hate that has formed inside my once peaceful and passive being.

Hurricane Her.

Why?

The question that haunts this darkened home.

Why?

I loved him with wild abandon. You knew this. Yet you made a choice. You refuse to accept that this was a choice. You *chose* to do this.

He chose to do this. He chose stolen moments with you over the never-ending ocean of love I gave.

Choices have consequences. Your choice had a sentence to serve.

A sentence you will never serve. Instead, you walked over to that house on the corner. You saw each light slowly flicker out. You pulled out a small key, tossed the remnants of guilt in with the rest, and quietly locked the door.

As you walked away, did you catch a glimpse of the broken being collapsed on the dimly lit floor?

She is the prisoner of your choice.

The sentence has been given, and serve it she must.

Crumple. Toss.

Dear Him,

Did you know how easy it was to love you?

It was like breathing. Let it not be mistaken that falling in love is something I do easily or often.

The Great Wall has nothing on the miles of stone I have carefully crafted to keep others out.

But you.

Each breath I took with you crumbled the walls stone by stone. Every laugh, every late night talk, every art taken in, every touch, every moment... slowly melted my walls until without trying and without realizing, I had fallen.

Inexplicably, unexplainably, and with my full soul devoted- in love with you.

You were given what no one else had been able to attain. My fully devoted, strong yet fragile, giving to a fault, broken and beautiful, swirling with emotion, overzealous, overanalyzing, over-loving, brimmed with passion...Heart.

I'm sure to you it felt like an icy, unexpected cannonball.

To me, it was slipping into the still waters of what my heart was created for and what I had long denied it access to.

Memories have flooded my brain like the high tide on the sandy shore. Each wave beats further into me as I scramble from the addicting waters. The waves bring such trophies of joy. The shells, trinkets, and perfectly rounded stones of my memories cause me to stand ankle deep in the water examining each one, as the ocean swirls around me.

Remember the time we had a dishsoap fight which ended in my curly strands soaked with suds as you ran your fingers through my hair.

Remember when I had that terribly strong long Island, and you carried me to my bed and whispered, "What can I do for you?"

Remember when we saw our first show together and we spent two hours discussing art, God, and our place in this world.

Remember sandwiches and chili, and late night tacos.

Remember holding me as I shook with fear and grief.

Remember New York.

Remember Hamilton.

Remember Laughter.

Remember love?

I remember love.

I find my feet rooted in the water as I find my treasures in the waves of memory.  
Remember. Remember. Remember.

Until I look up and see a dark wave has swollen, ready to overtake and crash into me.

In the wave I see carcasses of memory, dead trees we had once planted to produce life, debris, waste, pain, so much pain. I scream and attempt to force my feet to run.

“NOT these memories”, I gasp out just before the deadly wave overtakes me.

Remember the time you promised me I was the only one.

Remember how that was a lie.

Remember the nights I slept soundly, while you ran to her.

Remember the night you promised you wanted to live the rest of your life with me,

When the entire day you spent wrapped into Her.

Remember the time I screamed, *“I will not be second best”*

Remember you whispered, *“You are my only”*

Little did I know, I was barely scraping fourth best.

Remember. Remember there was more than one Her.

Remember the night you rocked my grieving heart to sleep and whispered, “I’m going to marry you.”.... While Her perfume still lingered on your body.

Remember the two years I gave you.

Remember how you stole them. Stole me.

Used me up until there was nothing left.

Remember when I found out?

Remember that I refused to give up.

Remember when you did?

The memories plunge me to the ocean floor. I choke for breath as each carcass hits me in the deathly tide. I can’t breathe. I can’t breathe. Stop. STOP. STOP. STOP. I can’t, I can’t. I CAN’T. Please Please. PLEASE STOP.

The wave chokes me out as the tide withdraws. I lay crumpled in the sand, bleeding, broken, and bruised.

Dear Him.

You took..... you stole all I had to give. You used me until there was nothing left.

You were my life partner. You were my Peter Pan. You were my symphony. You were the one whom my soul loves.

But you were and you are are two very different things.

You are my life's agony. You are only a shadow of the man I loved....I loved Peter Pan's shadow. You are the last note that will never be played.

You are the casualty of my soul....

Or are you?

Dear Me,

Breathe in.  
Breathe Out.

Stay sitting. Don't force yourself to get up.  
Take your time.

Breathe in.  
Breathe out.

Be still. The waves have battered you to the bone. Let yourself sit on the sandy shore as the life you planned disappears with the tide.

Dear Me,

It is okay to reach your hand, longing for the receding, deadly swell.  
It is okay to be still.

It is okay to grieve.  
It is okay to mourn.  
It is okay to cry.

**It is okay to miss Him.**

It is okay to scream. It is okay to scream. Scream. SCReam. SCREAM.

It is okay to break things.

It is okay...

It is okay....

It is okay to BREAK

Breathe in.  
Breathe out.

Look up.  
*"Father"?*

Peace. (spoken by other two actors)

*"I don't have the strength"*

That's okay (spoken by other actors- help her up)

Stand Up. Take a step. One more.  
One more. Again. Once more.  
Look..... You are walking.

Dear Me,

The journey before you is very long. The terrain is treacherous. In the valley, you will feel lonely. The weariness of your soul will make every step, every day a battle. One step. One step.

There will be nights where sleep will be the most elusive dream. These nights will lead to days of sheer exhaustion.

There will be days that simply leaving the house sounds like the greatest battle you have ever fought.

There will be people who may not understand. The shadows underneath your eyes will speak more stories than the words of your mouth can form.

There will be days that you have to cancel plans because everything hurts. There will be daily reminders of him.

One Step. One more.

There will be therapy sessions that you cannot even finish. There will be many nights spent alone, as you battle the inner demons. There will be days that you believe all the lies. When you feel worthless. Unworthy.

One step. Again. Come on. One more.

There will be days that you scream his name, as you smash the frame that once held his face. There will be nights that you drive past his street, and your heart aches for what once was. There will be days that it just aches. It just aches. It just aches.

Betrayal does not simply knock a few valuables over as it passes through, deciding to leave you unscathed.

No.

It ransacks you. It plows through your being with only the intent to leave you hollow, an empty shadow of your former self. It leaves you on that sandy shore... wishing the fatal tide would sweep you away, at least in his arms you felt full.

As you watch the swell disappear, remember to breathe. The sun is slowly breaking over the horizon.

“And the God of all grace will himself restore. Confirm. And establish you.”

Restore.

There will be days when laughter is not forced. When it comes peeling out of you like a nervous racehorse, ready to break from the gate that was holding it back.

There will be friends who refuse to let you walk alone. They look at that valley and the mountain beyond, and strap on their hiking boots. Here's looking at you Rage City and naked chickens.

There will daily be reminders that move you to tears. That you are seen. That you are loved. That you are worthy.

There will be days when you can go back inside that certain restaurant. That you can listen to that certain song again.

There will be days that you stand in the falling snow, and realize how beautiful and precious your life is.

The steps come faster now. One step. 5 steps. 1 mile down.

Confirm.

There will be a day that the valley seems less dark, and the mountain seems less intimidating.

There will be days when you realize just how strong you are. That you choose to persist.

***There will be a day when the days stop winning.***

You will conquer that next audition. That next job interview. The next opportunity.

You will see that cute boy across the coffee shop and shyly smile. And then awkwardly spill everything and you just OWN IT.

The dark ocean is not even visible because you are running now. You are LEAPING. You are LIVING.

Go out with friends. Make new friends. Make new memories. Reclaim EVERYTHING. Trust in the Lord. Love those around you. Serve those around you. Daily lift your hands up and scream ALL TO HIM I OWE.

Run a half marathon. Start that new job. Audition for everything. Act. Act with no fear. Let your passion pour out of you, it has been dammed up for far too long.

Love. Just love. You were made to love. You were made to give. You were made to create. You were made to live fearlessly.

Establish.

You aren't at the peak of that mountain yet. There are still some tricky trails to conquer. But for now, take time to sit on this precipice. Look at the world around you. It is so beautiful, you are beautiful, and the Lord is so good. This is your story. This is your testimony. Time to tell it.

It's time.

But first.

Dear Her.

I forgive you.

Dear Him....

I forgive you.

Dear Me.

Be Free.