

**730 days.
I've been going through something.**

I've found an awful truth about myself, Ben.

Alright, fuck it. I'll tell you all about it.

I've found how much I actually hate writing. It's really not convenient because, after spending four years at Uni in a Literature Major, I believe I should have know better, earlier, that I hate fucking writing, and it's because I...sit down with my own feelings and I have to really quiet my head, and I stand there, in front of a computer, or worse, a blank page of paper, staring at it, with a heart inside my chest, bleeding and drumming and being impossibly loud.

I guess I hate writing because that's the thing with writing. The whole world has to get very quiet and your heart gets to be loud, for it's going to be translated into paper.

I don't know. I never wrote to you, did I? I mean...I texted you multiple times, asking you to come around, asking you where you were, asking if you had forgotten about our date, asking all sorts of things, but writing...sitting down, blank paper, loud heart, I don't think so.

Not until now, at least. You died two years ago.

I am just able, barely, to sit down in front of my computer, a lousy computer, not romantic at all, and write to you. An open letter, about how I've lived the last 730 days. About how I've lived life without you, but not really.

You would have hated the world by now, there's so much shit going on. Animal rights are shit, feminism is shit, politics are absolute shit, music is shit, health crises are shit, gun trafficking is shit cinema is alright, books are alright. You would have hated who I became the first year after you died.

A boring, sad, sobbing blob, listening to the same songs on repeat, watching the same netflix show, caressing the same printed pictures, all sober, painfully sober, 'suddenly too aware' sober, a victim of my own sadness, of my own love, a witness of my heart ripped out and chopped, all bloody, in the dining table, ready to be eaten. Bon appetite.

I visited Phoenix Barn. I stayed there for weeks, I slept in a room you've slept in, I wore your coat and your Dad's, I climbed the same stairs, I recognized some things you talked about in real life. When I found myself alone I went through your stuff, and while I did so I wondered if I'll ever feel the same again.

Two years later, I hadn't, but people say I'm young.

But so were you.

Young and annoying and amazing and gorgeous, and for a second, a blinking second, you were there next to me.

Ben, I was not ready for that.

I was not ready to see the before picture in the flesh. The golden days, the cold water, Scamp. Suddenly, everything felt too real, and at the same time, somehow, I couldn't wait to wake up, back in Mexico, in my mom's bed. Like having a nightmare, and being too vulnerable, the common denominator was that I needed to sleep next to my mother. That's the only way your face wouldn't show up in my dreams. Are you scared of her, because of what happened in the hall? Or are you just embarrassed? Were we being too cheeky?

I had dinner with your dad very often, the days I managed to eat, that is. I sat down, facing the stairs and we would eat while listening to music, or listening to each other, and for a second I looked up, an anxiety eating my insides, wondering when were you coming down the stairs, fixing your shirt, to join us. The whole time I was there, it felt like something was missing. Months of endless disconnection. Missed calls.

Sometimes I would indulge myself and wrap around the sheets, imagining you were in the bathroom brushing your teeth. That I was no longer going to be cold because you were going to climb up the bed any minute and then I would go to bed alone, and sleep for 10 hours. It drained me, knowing I was there for the after photo. For the post war space.

Almost religiously, I went out to drive around St. Just with Paul. I would climb into his car, almost always getting confused by which way to climb inside and again, as I pulled on my seat belt and he started the car, I almost told him "Wait. He's not here yet."

I saw your teenage years through him. I saw your adulthood through Joe and Luke. What an amazing creature you were.

Paul told me about this time you went down Phoenix Barn road, one foot in a tiny skateboard, wobbling your way down, full speed in the middle of the night with a tiny red light dot on the back of it. They were following you, of course, with a cringe expression in their faces, already scared of the outcome of that hazard.

I bet you were only worried about how good it felt to be going that fast. How nice the sky looked, how fun this all was. No time to worry about anything else, and maybe that was the thing about you, Ben. Something so chaotic, yet so beautiful, one cannot look away if they tried. There was going to be an end of the road and maybe breaks will fail, but forever you had the memory of going down the road, followed by your friends and reaching Phoenix Barn in the end, broken bone or not, it was something to be seen.

I watched endless movies with Paul, endless TV shows, went on thousand of road trips, (we even went to Liverpool!) and during the whole time, while the most amazing friendship bloomed, I just kept thinking "Don't play the show, he's not here yet."

Some days I felt extremely happy and extremely lucky to be seeing your life through other people's stories. Jenny, Shoris, Paul, Linda. I felt like bursting with hope, I fell in love with you all over again, like it was a living thing, a beating heart, and then your dad told me we could go to the burial grounds now.

There was moments you were blissfully there and moments where you were nowhere to be seen.

A boring, sad, sobbing blob.

I was hoping to write a more hopeful letter. A happy one, but I cannot force myself to do that. Not today. Because I finally sat down in front of the computer and wrote to you, wrote an open letter to you, and If I had a way of knowing that you would read this I would just tell you how gorgeous you were, how much fun I had, how much time I wondered if someone could die from laughing that much, from liking someone else that much.

For 730 days I've been going through something.

I cried all the way from Oxford to Heathrow Airport. Your dad was my witness. He held my hand all the way and cried with me. I knew I was leaving England, I knew I would not be sleeping in the same bed again, I knew I was coming back to mourning alone, to forcing myself to stop thinking about you. It was an extra sensorial experience, to stare at myself in my depression chamber, a fetal position, my reflection yelling at me "Go out! Fall in love! Get over this, get over this, get over this!".

But how does one gets over Ben Marshall, huh? You don't. You just live your life trying to honor him, to make him proud, you try for your life to be a reminder that life itself can be messy and painful but in the end, you try for your life to be what you wanted it to be.

This is me trying.

I'll love you forever. I'll see you when I see you and you'll tell me all about it.

Love

painfully, luckily alive, More.