

**Please feel free to email me (revised and enlarged)**

**December 24, 2010**

**Boyce Brown**

“It’s hard to eat shit

Without having visions

And when they’re real

The world’s like heaven.”

– Allen Ginsberg

I quit my slave labor university job and moved out of my rental house which was collapsing all around me and just started stealth camping in the hidden pockets of Honolulu. I had a regular circuit of about 7 or 8 places I went to in rotation, although I spent most of my time up on a ridge above campus.

I thought I would get to “all but dissertation” in my PhD in a matter of weeks but it just kept dragging on and on and on. I love living outdoors now and then but it was starting to be a bit of drag. Rainy season didn’t stop when it usually does in March but just kept going on and on and on. I was schlepping 50 pounds in a big backpack a few miles on a bike almost daily.

My mom's downstairs tenants of five years moved out. We cut a deal. I'll help you fix up the downstairs in exchange for you letting me live there for a few weeks. This was late May.

I put up a profile and some pictures on a free dating website. Same as usual when I try my hand at this. I send out 100 little textual probes and get a tiny handful of responses, all of which fizzle out within a few back and forths. Except for one. One chick dug my profile and sent me a note. I checked out her profile. In one of her photos, she was holding two pistols across her chest in an x, wearing a long black skirt, red stockings, a funky wool hat, sunglasses, and a wry expression. She was Russian. A lawyer. A New Yorker.

Hmmm. Intriguing.

Date: May 24, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: aloha

To: T.R. Ponchik

Thanks for complimenting my profile.

Pistol packing and black-belted? What are you, Putin's niece?

Date: May 24, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: Re: aloha

To: Stonefruit

Hi :) I like your sense of humor. Tell me a bit about yourself pls! Where/with whom do you live? Single? Kid(s)? Job(s)?

Date: May 24, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: RE: aloha

To: T.R. Ponchik

Thanks, I think humor is very important.

I live by myself in the neighborhood I grew up in, Kalihi. Single. No kids. My last job was at the University of Hawaii as a professional education researcher, but I quit to write my dissertation. Like my profile said, my work has always been in school administration, education law at the state legislature, and non-profit administration. Some teaching. Stuff that is gratifying but doesn't pay well.

My mother, father, and ex-wife are all lawyers and I've grown up around the culture my entire life. I've known hundreds of them and can count the ones I like on one or two

hands.

I feel some insight into the Slavic soul from a junior year abroad as an exchange student in Belgrade. Recently I traveled back to the former Yugoslavia, so I saw it before and after the war.

Your turn. Why law? Why did you leave Russia? Why did you come to Hawaii?

Date: May 24, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: Re: aloha

To: Stonefruit

I live on X St.! Sounds like we are neighbors?

Why law? Why leave Russia? Why Hawaii? Serious questions! But would take way too long to respond in writing. Running out in a few minutes to take my kid to gymnastics. Perhaps, if you'd like, we could chat over coffee or a drink? It is the most efficient way to get to know each other and ascertain chemistry, don't u agree?

We could move to texting, if you'd like?

Date: May 24, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: Re: aloha

To: T.R. Ponchik

We are indeed neighbors. Drinks or coffee sounds great. Maybe something in the neighborhood?

We can text. My number is X.

I didn't see any Ponchik in the Hawaii Bar Association face book.

(I took her to a friend's backyard BBQ for our first date. I knew that would be a good call. She is a malahini (new to Hawaii) and a backyard BBQ would give her a good slice of island culture. There would also be a lot of people, so we wouldn't have the pressure of constant one-on-one attention during our first date.

I rolled up to the intersection she identified as being near her house in my mom's Austin mini. She was in North Carolina sorting out her parent's estate after the recent death of her father, my granddad.

T.R. showed up at the side of the car and dropped her phone getting in. It seemed like she was flustered, but in a good cute way; like "this seems interesting – whoops – my phone!" She got in. She was wearing glittery eye shadow.

“That glitter is gonna make me lose my sense of direction on the road!” I said.

She laughed and smiled. We stopped at a grocery store on the way and bought some oysters for grilling and condiments, lemon and Tabasco, sesame oil and shoyu.

It took me a little while to locate the party even though I had lived in that neighborhood for six years as a teenager. I finally found it. I parked and we walked up a steep wet driveway into the dark but towards the noise, a small well-lit house on the side of steep ridge.

I shook the hands of the men I knew there and kissed the cheeks of the women; our standard island greeting.

From then on, T.R. and I grilled oysters and pretty much ignored the party, happy to be digging each other and learning about one another’s backgrounds. She had a Harvard B.A. and a Yale J.D. She wasn’t no idiot. Pretty hot too. Tall skinny Russian Jew. She went to the “fame high school” in New York City for painting after emigrating from Russia at 13.

Alright! Arty! Bonus points!

Date: May 25, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: Re: Those websites

To: Stonefruit

Thanks! I had a great time last night.

Date: May 25, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: Re: Those websites

To: T.R. Ponchik

Me too.

Date: May 25, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: Re: Those websites

To: Stonefruit

Let me know if you'd like to hang out again some time!

Date: May 25, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: Re: Those websites

To: T.R. Ponchik

I surely would. Anytime.

Date: May 26, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: Re: Those websites

To: Stonefruit

Guess u prefer not to text? ;) I have a nanny this afternoon. R u free?

(I'm thinking "nanny?! Take care of your own damn children.")

Date: May 26, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: Re: Those websites

To: T.R. Ponchik

I am free this afternoon. What is your pleasure? I'd be happy to show you some highlights of our neighborhood, or whatever strikes your fancy.

Date: May 26, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik



Subject: Re: Those websites

To: Stonefruit

Nanny arrives at 2:30 pm. I wanted to bodyboard. Called surf report but doesn't sound like there's much surf. I would love to go on an adventure with you! In the neighborhood or otherwise. Hoping your dealer got back to you! ;)

(Weed dealer that is.)

Date: May 26, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: RE: Those websites

To: T.R. Ponchik

If you want to get your gills wet, we can, even tho there is no surf today. There's always something at Sandy's or Makapuu at least.

We can swing by my friend's place on the way but he's still not answering my calls.

Date: May 26, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: Re: Those websites

To: Stonefruit

Sandy's or Makapuu sounds fun! When should I be ready?

Date: May 26, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: RE: Those websites

To: T.R. Ponchik

We can go now, but I'm car less. Map quest X street.

Date: May 26, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: Re: Those websites

To: Stonefruit

Just left you a vm - see u in 15-20 min?

Date: May 26, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: Re: Those websites

To: T.R. Ponchik

Perfect

(She rolled up in a BMW 635 with one side smashed in.

"What happened here?" I asked.

"Oh, I hit the wall while I was going down the driveway of a parking garage."

Hmmm. OK. I think I'll drive. Less trouble telling directions too. If she was new to town, she wouldn't have known how to get where I wanted her to go.

I took her to Spitting Caves on the way to surfing, an incredibly beautiful 60 foot rocky cliff on the sea. Two fisherman guarded their poles down by the surf. We ensconced ourselves in a brushy nook in the heights above them. She said "you're cute!" and we dove into one another and started making out. Kissing, sucking on her little bitty titties – oh, one is pierced – feeling up her cunt – oh, it's pierced too.

Damn, we might have a freak on our hands! Will those fishermen see us? Ah, who cares.

We spent so much time making out we never got around to surfing.

On the way back to town she mentioned a Bloodhound Gang song she liked. Neither of us could remember the title, even when she recited most of the lyrics. I recognized it right away. I like the Bloodhound Gang too. "You've had enough of two hand touch, you like

it rough.” I even called my best friend, who had turned me on to them in the first place, but he couldn't remember the song title from the lyrics either. Finally, the google machine helped me figure out which one it was. I bit torrented it, and sent her the file.

Within two weeks of meeting one another, we were professing love and discussing baby names. I was announcing my ownership over her, to her delight. For the next two months we were inseparable, shoulder to shoulder, hip to hip, 24/7. Our base of operations had a lanai with a beautiful view of Honolulu harbor, surrounded by the yellow-white and ruby blossoms of Tahitian ginger and Plumeria.

By day we tooted all over Oahu in her BMW, which was an absolute joy to drive. It just purred. It was so heavy, so powerful, and made such a great noise. I gave her the full-on puka shell tour guide treatment, all the secret beautiful spots.

I did all the driving all the time and loved it.

But mostly we just surfed. All over the south shore during the swells of summer. Well, I surfed. She mostly bobbed and tried to avoid actual waves.

I surfed more that summer than the previous five years put together.

By night we macked. Grilled more oysters (which rapidly became our signature dish), shrimp, filet mignon, fish, whole calamari, vegetables marinated in extra virgin cold

pressed olive oil, balsamic vinegar and garlic. Drank champagne with caviar. Drank nothing but top shelf whiskey, scotch, wine, and beer. Smoked the best weed. Listened to the best music. Watched the funniest videos (Chappelle, Ali G, Beavis and Butthead, Will Farrell, you name it). Looked at the greatest art. Read each other poetry and fucked each other senseless.

I tried to show her arty stuff I liked. She seemed to tolerate it but never quite get it or be interested by it. My curiosity is insatiable and omnivorous. I was surprised to learn hers was not, even though she had been such a great painter. It became a pattern. Many of the things I loved the most, I couldn't get her to understand.

Even Russian art movies like "Andrei Rubilev" by Tarkovsky. Nothing.

I remember one time I went to a volunteer work day at a local nature preserve/community garden in Kalihi valley, the valley I grew up cruising around in. I worked with 50 little kids from a Hawaiian culture-based charter school I have been associated with for a decade.

We built garden beds. It was adorable. After they left, the job candidates (myself among them) and a full-time AmeriCorps volunteer and eventually the main administrator took us on a tour of the land. Even though they had cut down the trees, I still retained a primordial muscle and visual memory of the topography of the land everywhere we stepped. The old Japanese tea house where I almost squatted. Everything.

When I came home to try and share my overwhelming bubbling enthusiasm with T.R., I could tell she didn't get it. At all. She is a New Yorker. What could my incredibly passionate love of being outdoors, native Hawaiian culture, and environmental conservation possible mean to her? Oh well, I still wanted to try and make it work.

For the honeymoon phase, it did. We just utterly fucking macked.

Nicknames were involved. She was monkey, penguin, penguin of my monkey, monkey of my penguin, baby cakes, cakes of my baby, milfy, milfy spice, apple of my eye and fire of my loins, and a few others. I had a bushel full of endearing nicknames for her. This is only a smattering. Naturally, they all had a back story too.

She said "you're always finding ways to compliment me." Like it was flattering but at the same time overkill from someone she wanted to be more authoritarian.

She was not without baggage. Within a couple weeks, I sensed she might be bipolar. I asked her straight up "are you bi-polar?"

"Sometimes."

Lord almighty, here it comes.

She admitted to smashing a new flat screen TV still in the box and not one but two functional laptops. She was still married and living with him in separate rooms (even as he dated three chicks while T.R. and I were together), a six year old daughter, \$200,000 in debt for student loans and credit cards and needing to declare bankruptcy, a DUI in Arizona that (she alleged) prevented her from taking the bar in Hawaii, even though she had already been here for a year.

Even though she was still married, I ain't the cheating type. It was all upfront with me and this guy. T.R. and I often went over to her place to steal his food and Glenlivet. She seemed to take special delight on these pillaging runs. He didn't seem to mind too much, like he had become accustomed to a pattern.

"Varishka!" he called her, Russian for "thief."

Sometimes we even hung out with him and whatever girlfriend he was with at the time. We even went to the beach with girlfriend number 2 as a double date (even though he wound up dumping her by text too - what a tool - they deserve each other). For awhile, everything seemed cool. Not like I was sneaking around with a married woman. Hell no. I would never do that. We all knew the score. Boy, what a nice, mellow, and understanding boyfriend I was.

She said the marriage had been emotionally over for two or three years and they just hadn't gotten around to divorcing, in part because they had a kid. Hmmm. OK.

Early on she said “you can’t ever ask me about my previous sex life.” Why, because of quantity or depravity? Perhaps both? What were we talking about here, dozens of lovers a year? Some uniquely hideous kink?

She did have a sexy latex two piece number and we were talking about a threesome from the start and she talked about S & M shows she used to go to in NYC (and she wanted to go to one in Honolulu during our relationship) and she talked about a few of the girls she had been with. “Don’t ever ask me about my sex life” is a phrase to surely pique a fella’s interest. I was right next to her when she called her doctor for the results of her STD test, so we could stop wearing condoms (or if it wasn’t a real call, she sure was a convincing actress).

So I thought “Well, if she is clean and the skills she has developed from her experience accrue to my benefit, I can live without knowing.” But I there were definitely moments when I wanted to say “Tell me your entire sexual history, everything.” I’m no prude. I don’t think there is anything she could have said that would have shocked me except maybe incest I guess. I always figured there would be time to ask about that later but the clock ran out on that one.

Kind of like that time I was hanging out at a friend’s house and saw this image. Two of my friends, surfer boys, great physiques, both wearing rubber slippers, board shorts, no shirt, sunglasses, coconut frond hats, and each holding a gay Paris Hilton dog. They



looked like twins. How funny. Masculine looking dudes with little gay dogs. How incongruous. I should have taken a picture. Ah well, I see them kind of often. There will always be time to restage the picture when I have a camera.

One of the dogs got run over a few days later.

In spite of all the warning signs and red flags, did I care? Hell no.

I was like Kanye West in one of the theme songs of our courtship, our honeymoon period: “you can’t tell me nothing.” We were strictly balling and I was macking as hard as I ever macked before. She was gorgeous and the sex was hot. Even though I couldn’t bust a nut inside her, which was weird. That had never happened before. I couldn’t get her off either, which had also never happened before. Just like I had to finish myself off manually and blow a load at her eyes, so to she always had to finish herself off with her Hitachi Magic Wand, what she called her “Japanese girlfriend.” But once she got rolling with that thing, look out. She might cum four or five times.

And porn! Tons of porn! She almost couldn’t have sex without a laptop or two of youporn.com going. Well, definitely she could but she sure preferred it on.

I did freaky shit with her I never did with anybody else. Fisted her twice, plenty of anal. She was dying for a threesome. So was I. Then she was dying for a foursome. “You think I’m gonna let some dude fuck you?” “Why not?” she asked. Oh fuck. This chick is gonna

be trouble.

She loved to suck my cock, which she called "majestic." She made the "glug glug" choking-on-it sound instead of the light moan most chicks do, a real turn on. And she used to deep throat it all the way down, constantly, another turn on.

She swallowed gallon upon gallon of cum and never spit once. I blew loads all over her and you know what? She invariably slept with it on.

One time she said "Use me however whenever you want. If you want to fuck me and I'm asleep just start fucking me."

She was a freak. I loved it.

She was also my height, tall for a woman. Her legs were even longer than mine. They were so long that when I bent her over for doggy style, her twat was still inches above my belly button and I had to shove her legs to the side to get the twat and the cock at the same altitudes.

She said many beautiful things. "You're the ideal man for me." "You're so good for me." "You're so good for the twat." "You are a masterful lover." I even believed it. I thought this had the potential to be my last relationship. I wanted to grow old with her.

I saved her life once when she got thrown against the rock walls of Point Panic, a surf break in town. I was bodysurfing, she was body boarding. I surfaced to look at her position every two or three minutes. I saw her fading into the rocks. Oh shit. I knew she wouldn't know what to do. I started hauling ass swimming towards her. After a minute, I am half way there and she has begun climbing up the rocks. Oh double shit. She can either climb out of it or get into even deeper, more dangerous territory. I finally arrived at the rocks after two minutes swimming top speed. She ducked behind boulders as the surf pounded in. Not bad. She is struggling but she has good instincts.

"Throw me your fins!" I shouted. She did. I stuffed them in my board shorts as I swam, hovering around her.

"Throw your board in the water!" She did. Waves slammed it into the rocks. Forget about that. That is the last thing I care about right now. She ducked to avoid another set of waves pounding into the rocks.

I shouted "come more down and jump into the water when I tell you, after this next wave!"

Crash went the wave. She lodged herself behind a boulder. As the spray and foam dissipated, she started inching her way cautiously down the rocks. I wanted her low enough to make a safe jump and to do it half way between waves.

“OK! Now! Jump!”

She did. I knew the next set of big waves was rolling in. I grabbed her and threw her arms around my torso in a lifeguard hold.

“Hang on baby. We’re moving out,” I told her and started swimming to safety out of the waves with a body as big as mine on my back.

It is like the visionary comedian Bill Hicks said: “It’s gonna take a very special woman to make me happy. Or, a lot of average ones.” I thought I was her special man. I would come to learn I was only one of her average ones.

She liked it rough in the sack. She wanted an authoritarian, domineering man. I've been a feminist my whole life but this has been changing lately, even before I met her. There are differences between men and women. We each have our natural roles and the natural male role it to run shit. We are bigger and stronger. It is simple evolutionary biology. We protect and provide for. The timing was incredible.

One time she said "you don't even rape me, hit me, spank me, or handcuff me," very peeved. Shit, you must be kidding. I bent her over my knee then and there and gave her five swats on each ass cheek.

One time she said "beating and spousal rape used to be common in the old days in Russia

among the peasantry. It works.”

God, what a weirdo.

I brought up the legal implications of her attitude on occasion after that.

"If this relationship ever goes south, and I've actually done the kind of shit you keep asking for, that will be my ass, not yours."

"I wish you would leave that kind of talk out of the bedroom."

Well, it will still be my ass and not yours, no matter what you say now.

Then one time I spanked her again thinking that was what she wanted now and then and she said "It is so demeaning when you do that."

What the fuck did this chick want?!

She said she was a painter. I asked to see her portfolio. I was expecting to see some cute little sketches of this or that. But my god, she was absolutely incredible. She showed me a little book of snapshot-sized photos. They were all photographs of large color paintings she had made. I instantly thought of Chagall, Moreau, Redon, and some of the other most esoteric and visionary artists of the last two centuries. She was that good. But apparently

quit since college on, except for some totally indifferent abstract crapspressionism over the last few years.

She showed me a Fiona Apple video of the interior of a house getting destroyed. I thought “I’ll see your gratuitous destruction and raise you arty” and showed her “Media Burn,” a famous media piece, a short video of a rocket car smashing into a wall of televisions, and some Chris Burden shorts, like the one of him getting shot and the one of him crawling naked over broken glass.

Early on in our relationship, it seemed like the cockier and more self-assured I was, the more she liked it. “I’ve already forgotten more about art than you will ever know.” She responded with adoring approval. Then I saw the photo book of her amazing paintings and thought “maybe I spoke too soon.”

For two months, our honeymoon phase was incredible.

I took T.R. and her little girl to the state farm fair (food! rides! games! pig races!) and other things. She kept saying how great I was with her, over and over. It felt like it was true. It was fun being a step-dad. Quite draining because the girl was very precocious and an absolute sponge for all the attention you could give her, but a cute role for me nonetheless.

I even played host and puka shell tour guide again for her heavily-accented Russian

family from New York City when they came to visit Honolulu. Now that I look back on it, her dad did have a lecherous aspect. Did he sexually abuse her? That would explain a lot. The sexual freaks in my life have almost always been sexually abused.

She had lots and lots of sexy underwear. She said “You dress for dinner, I dress for bed.” One time I was doing our usual dinner routine, grilling something delicious on the lanai. She came outside in this incredibly sexy purple ensemble. A bra/camisole, panty/ultra short skirt and garter strap and stocking thing.

People standing on the lanai are completely visible to anybody on the street just 15 feet below. Now, I dig people like the Beats, Henry Miller, and Anais Nin for bringing a frank discussion of complete erotic reality into contemporary literature and I think it shows in my writing. There is not a whole lot sexually I wouldn't be willing to talk about with anyone adult. But even I have certain limits of propriety.

“T.R., you look fabulous but, c'mon, there are little kids riding bikes on the street.”

“So?! It won't traumatize them.”

“Go put a robe on.”

I played tour guide for another friend of hers, a very young Yale law professor who was a major ass dweeb. I took them to some beautiful remote tidal pools at the bottom of a high

cliff. They wouldn't have had any idea about this place without their native guide.

It seemed like I was settling into a role. I was an only child until 14, then one half brother for each set of divorced parents. I loved my solitude and guarded it jealously, even during my marriage, which probably helped to kill it. Maybe I would be a family man for the second half of my life?

During our honeymoon trip through the Pacific Northwest after being together for about two months (without her kid; she had been at her two sets of grandparents on the mainland for most of the summer), I thought about a hypothetical conversation with her husband: “Dude, I’m taking your women. I’m taking your wife and I’m taking your daughter.” Our trip was a combination of motels, camping, and visiting my friends and her family. It was incredible.

One night, it was a little dangerous. It was her first time camping, my 5 millionth. We had a beautiful site right next to a medium sized but solidly pumping river. We were isolated, in the corner. Several spots were empty until the next occupied site. She was so excited to be there. At around 11pm she just started bouncing all over everywhere in our campsite. She even got up on our rental SUV's roof. Come down from there you silly goose. She is still bouncing around. Oh fuck, she is by the edge of the river. She could fall and smack her head or break a limb and we are hours from civilization. I started to get nervous and moved towards her. She stumbled on the river's edge. Oh shit! Ah, she only scraped her shins. She got off lucky. What a relief. That could have been bad.



“Ok, when we get back you're moving in with me.”

For a while, it was awesome. I'm a step dad! Instant family! Just add water! The little girl made friends with other kiddies in the neighborhood, just like I had 35 years ago. T.R. said the girl had never had that before since they moved to Honolulu a year before. They didn't know anyone. The little girl's last neighborhood didn't have any kids. Her last school sucked and she didn't make any friends there either. I bet she was the only snowflake there.

We moved in together. Her husband had arranged to move her enormous amount of shit out of storage and into our place. When we got back from our trip, I couldn't believe it. It was neck deep in every room. How am I going to fit it all in? But I did it and built two disassembled beds because I loved her and thought we had a beautiful future together.

We shared media together getting to know one another. We watched things of mutual interest, mostly her favorites she turned me on to.

50 cent “Candy Shop,” Kanye West “Flashing Lights,” and others, which almost invariably involved hot cars and hot women.

Now, I have always thought those kind of videos were crass, materialist, and appealed to our basest, most trivial instincts. Actually, when I was 15, I was already reading the

Beats, deep into a lifetime study of Zen Buddhism, and listening to arty, esoteric music. Even then I was an urbane, sophisticated, and sensitive artist-intellectual.

But watching this stuff with her, I wanted more and more. The hot cars in the music videos got me on a car kick. I started you-tubing every high end sports car I could think of, preferably going as fast as possible. I started watching a lot of off-roading. Rally races, Paris-to-Dakar, Baja 500, stuff like that.

Low brow comedy became another staple. And of course porn, incessant porn.

One day I said “you got me acting like a 15 year old. Just checking out hot cars, hot chicks, and retarded comedy.” She laughed and smiled approvingly. But the deeper I got into it, the less she approved of it. After a week or two, if I had watched more than half an hour of cars, she might say “ that’s boy stuff” dismissively.

Same with the dumb humor. “Boy stuff,” although she never lost her insatiable appetite for Beavis and Butthead.

WTF!? Did she want me to cultivate archtypical male appetites or not?

One time, her daughter's best little girlfriend, a Filipina girl of 8 or 9 came over, and asked T.R. about me: “Is he a teenager or a man?”

T.R. laughed. "A little bit of both, I think."

Then domesticity starting to take its toll. I tried to kick Xanax, thinking a four year dependency might be the biggest part about why I couldn't bust a nut in her guts. It led to an insomniatic withdrawal nightmare week.

Date: September 14, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: Pls let me know how u r doing, Baby S

To: Stonefruit

Better, thank you. That late night walk was a life saver. You are a treasure. I finally slept a few hours too. If it isn't convenient for your daughter to stay with your husband tonight, please feel free to bring her home.

(Then I had a heavy flu/cold thing for two weeks. Then I had a week of debilitating headaches. I never get any of this crap! I usually only get sick every couple of years.

I finally started to recover. I went to campus on my bike daily to establish a structure and encourage progress on my dissertation writing. I finally had a good schedule going. I was feeling better and getting traction on my thesis. Everything seemed to be getting back on track.

Then a moped rammed me from behind at 35 mph while I rode my bicycle home from campus. It destroyed my bike, a real Maserati, a carbon fiber Trek road racer.

For a month, this woman who said she wanted a macho authoritarian dude saw me instead enfeebled, my virility at low ebb.

Domesticity continued to aggravate our love. I sensed a distance growing between us. We talked about it. We agreed we didn't want to break up.

One time, she said "you don't even like my husband. He's the father of my daughter. You don't even like my daughter."

WTF?

"No. I don't like your husband." She knew that. Seems like sometimes she didn't even like him. Or maybe, liked him as the father of her child, but didn't respect him. "I think he's a tool."

In a publicity photo for a book he wrote as a young man, he looked like a surly Gene Vincent. A rebel. Then he got an Ivy League degree, pulled a 180, and became an imperialist running dog of the national (in)security establishment.

A Yale PhD in international relations and yet he knows absolutely nothing about

international relations beyond the superficial consensus reality, which is completely full of shit. Which he doesn't see. Also a bit of a dweeb. And his art sucks. So fuck him.

"Your daughter is a handful but I assume there will come a moment when I fall in love with her and then I'll be able to tolerate anything from her."

So where was this animosity coming from? It seemed more than a bit schizo. Maybe she was schizo, not bi-polar. Some of her medicines were prescribed for both.

I went to Texas to visit my dad and family I hadn't seen in four years and to make plans to develop land we had just bought on Big Island, so I could move my girlfriend and stepdaughter there too. T.R. seemed down. We were going to homestead and live off the grid. I thought she was into it. I guess I was wrong.

Before I left, we had a little fight about cleaning. She had been doing her new job for about a month and every other day we had the kid and she had to take her to school, so she was usually up around 6:30 am and out the door at 7:30 am. Invariably, her daughter had been up since 6:00 am and was talking to one of her grandmothers on her cell phone about fairy land and all other kinds of imaginary realms, invariably ruled by discipline, procedure, authority, law, and order. Not necessarily justice. Very Saturnine for a little child. It woke me up every time, drilling through the closed door of her room and the foam plugs in my ear.

T.R.'s lack of help cleaning was starting to piss me off. I was about ready to dress her

down for it. One night she brought home this small stuffed monkey with huge plastic eyes that was waving hello. She clearly adored it and saw it as a token of our love, since one of my pet names for her was monkey. I laced into her about the cleaning.

I said "When I stay home to write my dissertation, I spend at least two hours cleaning up after you guys. You leave food everywhere, crap everywhere, the lights on, the doors open. At least just put your dishes in the sink. At least just give me a thank you now and then."

She got defensive. "Well, there are lots of jobs we have to split."

"What are you talking about?"

"Like driving. I drive to work every day."

"You drive to work every day? Of course you drive to work every day. I pedal or take the bus to campus everyday. Aren't we both in charge of our own transportation? What the hell are you talking about?"

"And another thing," I was on an authoritarian roll (role?) "This monkey stays in the closet. I can't stand cutesy wootsy shit and these eyes are disturbing."

She started crying silently. Oh shit. I have gone too far. I might have broken something.

Oh fuck. I screwed the pooch. I overplayed the macho role I thought she wanted but I was still learning how to inhabit. I “displayed fear,” (always a no-no for those drawn to alpha males). I shit all over her trite, commercialized, but obviously heart-felt token of our relationship.

As I look back on it, this was about the time her mood started to shift. Giving the monkey a place of esteem on the bookshelf in our living room or its own little nook by a window didn't help. She began to grow distant.

At the airport as I left to visit my family in Texas she said “promise me you will stay faithful and monogamous.”

"Of course, cakes of my baby.")

Date: October 8, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: Hi sweetie!

To: T.R. Ponchik

Hey babe!

Made it to Austin safe and sound. Boy my train from Dallas to Austin took forever. It is great to see my family again, especially my brother. We all met at the bar he works at. A

very cool place. In fact, Austin itself is as cool as I remember. Sure has had a lot of building development in the four years since I was here last though.

Let's get on Skype. My name is stonefruit\_X

I hope we can IM chat and videophone a lot while I am here. Still planning on 2-3 weeks like I said.

I had another nightmare last night - ugh.

Miss you, love you. Hope everything is going well.

Your hot bf,

Stonefruit

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: October 8, 2010 1:08 am

Howdy. Awake? Feel like chatting? : )

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: October 9, 2010 1:19 am



Let me know if you wanna chat

(I checked out her Facebook wall. She posted "Boyfriend in Texas. Landladyfriend in North Carolina. Boss in Egypt. I could go on." Guess she felt abandoned. It had only been a few days. Then she posted: "It's easy to break up by text. Just type 'It ova.' That's local for "We should break up. Fare thee well."

Major league WTF!

First, big foul for lame use of pidgin, our local dialect of English here in Hawaii, by a malahini. Second, how could she even think about doing something so entirely craven as breaking up by text?)

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: October 10, 2010 4:36 pm

Love u

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: October 12, 2010 4:55 am

V unhappy. Not optimally functioning alone and with this communication. Better break

up? Sorry. Let's stay friends please.

(WTF! I tried to contact her and couldn't get through. I tried texting, telephone, email, video phone. Nothing worked.)

Date: October 14, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: wtf?

To: T.R. Ponchik

was that break up text?!

(Was she fucking kidding me?! I couldn't believe it.)

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: October 14, 2010

Will look up my Skype info. Husband has houseguests so daughter staying w/me. When would you like 2 Skype? Any return plans?

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: October 15, 2010

Skype name is TR.Ponchik. I'm home if you'd like 2 speak.

Text message from Stonefruit to T.R. Ponchik

Date: October 16, 2010

What is going on?!

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: October 16, 2010

Daughter's bday party now, not a good time 2 talk. How about 2nite. I've been busy and exhausted. What time is good?

Text message from Stonefruit to T.R. Ponchik

Date: October 17, 2010

I love you, Ponchik.

Date: October 18, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject:

To: Stonefruit

Stonefruit, I am sorry you feel upset. You knew I was unhappy. I loved you, then I became unhappy because of our differences, and I stayed unhappy. You are an awesome, brilliant, enlightened, unique man, but we are different. Your leaving and our lack of communication after you left was only one factor in my unhappiness.

Please be kind to let me know your return plans because I would strongly prefer not to have any surprise confrontation. I can pick you up from the airport and otherwise I sincerely hope our friendship survives. In any case, I would really appreciate knowing the date and time of your return when you know.

Date: October 18, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject:

To: T.R. Ponchik

Just out of curiosity and because I am always looking for ways to improve myself, what were our differences and how did I make you feel unhappy?

I heard you say “you're the man of my dreams,” “you are so good for me,” “you're so good for my twat,” “you are a masterful lover,” and variations on these themes so many times that I actually believed them. You know what? I thought the feeling between us was always mutual and profound. Great sex, easy warmth, a deep and abiding bond. Then this. It seems so out of left field. That is what I can't get my head around. If there is any

hope of salvaging a friendship, I am going to need to know what went wrong in more detail.

"Me leaving and my lack of communication was only one factor" in your unhappiness. What were the others? Why didn't you share them with me before running off AWOL? I know you were frustrated that you felt I was neglecting you by working on my dissertation some evenings and weekends. I was frustrated with your hypersomnia and many other things, but I took the bad with the good, which I thought is what people do with relationships. At least, that was the main thing frustrating you which you articulated. The dissertation was going to be over in a few months. Then I would have my life back and could give you a whole lot more attention. Which I was looking forward to a lot.

I wasn't at all sure I was going to move to the Big Island immediately upon my return to Hawaii - because then you wouldn't be with me right away. I wanted to go ahead of you and daughter by a few months if I had to, to build a place. But to wait until May after daughter's school year ended for you guys to come over - that really felt like too long for me to wait. I mean the point of being together is to be together, right? I was torn. I do think the shit is about to hit the fan sooner rather than later in the outside world, and I wanted my family (you, daughter, and I - and my Texas folks) to be prepared for it, but then again, I passionately wanted to be with you on a daily basis. So I hadn't made any decisions about what I was going to do upon my return in 2-3 weeks at all.

Believe me, if I was going to fuck off, I would've put all my shit in storage before I left. I

thought about that but didn't do it. To my mind, a major vote of confidence our relationship. Which I guess was not interpreted by you that way at all.

For a few days after I arrived, no, I didn't want to talk to you. I admit I did need a few days to myself, partially to process how suddenly and deeply we had (I thought) fallen in love. Then I spent a long time alone with my brother, who I haven't seen in four years and is one of the main reasons I came up here. I didn't even bring my phone or laptop when I went to go cruise with him. Then I wanted you to get on Skype, cuz I didn't know what my phone payment plan was. I'm on Stepdad's family plan. I don't know if there would be some massive roaming charge or what. So I tried to get you on Skype, because I really wanted to communicate with you, preferably for free and not \$100s in roaming fees.

And the time zones suck too. I know weekday mornings you are always rushing to get out the door so that leaves weeknights. With a 5 hour difference, when you usually come home around 630pm, it is already 11:30pm my time. I am usually asleep or winding down fast by then. By my second weekend away, I was trying hard to reach you, to no avail.

Also, besides wanting to see my family that I haven't seen in many years and to make concrete plans for the Big Island/survival of soon-to-come significant economic-geopolitical strife, reasonable goals, I think, I know you know what I was going through in the weeks right before I left. For goodness sakes, I was having repeated nightmares

about sleeping and waking in our very own house! Wouldn't you like a change of scene in such a case?

If you honestly hope to salvage a friendship out of this, then you will call me tonight and help me make sense of what happened.

(I was finally able to get in contact with her through Skype IM. No, she doesn't want to do a video call. I try to pin her down.

What the fuck is going on? What is it about me you don't like?

Maybe there is room for movement. She wouldn't explain. Finally, the most I could coax out of her was "you don't like my being on my phone, you don't like Facebook, you don't like rats, you don't like to know anything about my job."

Phone, Facebook, rats, and her job?! Are you fucking kidding me?!

Yes, she was always on her phone, which I saw as debilitating her life skills (could she even read a map if she could no longer use the mapping function?), a tool of social atomization from the reality of her surroundings, not a means of true communication. But fine, she's Gen Y, I'm Gen X. If that is her bag so be it. Except for some occasional grouching, who cares?

Same with Facebook. A Facebook friend is not a real friend in flesh and blood. More social atomization. She had deleted the "My boyfriend is gone" and the "it ova" posts on her wall. Well, I guess between a break up text and being deleted from a Facebook wall, I am officially persona non grata to a Gen Y-er.

I wasn't Gen-Y techie enough for her, even though I have made three websites, I blog, I am a digital videographer, I had online videos up before practically anybody, etc etc etc, blah blah blah.

Oh well. And then the rats. Oh, the rats.

She asked me early on if she and the girl could have rats. They loved rats and had had them before as pets. OK, you can have one rat. They came home with two. "It's ok," she said. "They are both sisters." Fuck. Whatever.

Their cage is initially inside our apartment. They are throwing food and shit onto the carpet all around their cage. I put a towel down beneath their cage. Even that is not enough to capture all of the shit they are flinging everywhere. I move them outside near our kitchen window. They start to get too stinky. You can smell it from inside. I move them to the backyard.

A few weeks later the girl goes "this one has a bump on its tail." Ah fuck. They are brother-sister.



Still later, the girl and her main playmate on the street forget to close the cage tightly after they are done playing with them and they escape. Wonderful. A pair of breeding rats on the loose.

About a week later, the girl finds them hiding in some cracks in a rock wall in the backyard. I'm relieved they are found and not on the loose, but pissed they are back in my life.

One day T.R. says "Now don't get mad." Ah fuck. That is never a good phrase to hear. It usually means "Get ready to suppress your totally natural reaction to be furious." "Now don't get mad, but the rats just had children."

Wonderful. I approved one rat and now I'm stuck with a family of inbred rats.

"You can keep the adult male and take the rest to the humane society."

"That's one option," she said. One option?! What happened to her love of an authoritarian man? I was starting to get pissed.

I don't like knowing anything about her job? No, I didn't. She has a Yale J.D. but instead of being a lawyer and making \$200,000 a year, she is a secretary making \$40,000 a year. For a tax attorney. Is it possible to imagine a more dry and excruciatingly tedious legal

practice? I asked her about her job now and then to be polite though, because I am a nice guy.

"I love it! I get to exercise my creativity! One time, I made this report, and I made some of the papers green and some of them blue."

This from a painter I immediately compared to Chagall in my mind the first time I saw her work?!

Or: "how was that lunch? Weren't all the secretaries going to take you out to lunch for a hello thing?"

"It was great. I had ginger chicken. They were all so nice to me."

Shit, howdy, and goddamn. Sounded pretty boring to me from top to bottom.)

Date: October 18, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: Re:

To: Stonefruit

Skype was not working for me.

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: October 18, 2010 7:07 pm

I sent you an email. Please find the kindness, compassion and understanding in your heart not to be angry with me for feeling we are too different to make each other happy.

Date: October 19, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: Re:

To: T.R. Ponchik

Well, clearly we are not meant to be.

Quelle damage. I wanted to help you and support you and be your strong shoulder to lean on so you could have at least a fighting chance at living a rich, rewarding, and fulfilling life.

Good luck being insane and yet still somehow also unmedicable, having a kid that will eliminate your freedom of action for the next 15 years, being trapped in a sexless marriage, financially bankrupt, and unable to work in your professional field.

Text message from Stonefruit to T.R. Ponchik

Date: October 19, 2010

I apologize 4 that hateful email. It was written in rage, confusion and heartbreak. I 2  
aspire 2 civil relations. May all the good things in life come 2 u.

(I returned home to Hawaii from Texas and moved all of my stuff upstairs while she was  
still at work in one afternoon.)

Text message from Stonefruit to T.R. Ponchik

Date: October 23, 2010

Hope u r well, erstwhile gf, new friend. I will always cherish our brief time together. All  
the best 2 u in yr next phase of life. Be at peace.

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: Saturday, October 23, 2010 5:03 pm

Hi Stonefruit, saw you called. Thanks for your last 2 texts. I appreciate our relationship as  
well, wishing you the best. Pls let me know what u wanted to talk about.

Text message from Stonefruit to T.R. Ponchik

Date: Saturday, October 23, 2010 5:11 pm

I want 2 talk about us, for closure, clarity and self-improvement.

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: Saturday, October 23, 2010 6:16 pm

Please feel free to email me.

Text message from Stonefruit to T.R. Ponchik

Date: Saturday, October 23, 2010 5:11 pm

Well, u didn't respond to my last email, so no point 2 that. Face2face would have showed proper respect 2 what we had but I guess this is our postmodern goodbye.

(As we were breaking up. It was next to impossible to get any type of communication out of her, most of all voice. Definitely not face-to-face, phone once or twice. During a call she said something something something "my therapist said" something something something. I immediately forgot the words surrounding "my therapist" because they were so patently retarded I knew instantly and intuitively they would be a waste of brain space to remember but I also knew just as intuitively she had talked about us in therapy and her therapist validated her decision to dump me and she was grateful for his professional stamp of approval of her impulses and eager to use the credentialing support in her mind.

Who was this quack, to be so firmly convinced she is acting in her best interest breaking up with me? To arrive at such a conclusion, there is no way he could possibly know the

entire story. I googled him. He got his medical degree in the Dominican Republic. Great. Probably not the best and brightest psychiatrist in the world.

One night I'm upstairs and I see her arrive at 12:45 am with a dude carrying a guitar in a soft case slung over his shoulder like a haole Kikaida. Uh oh. Chicks can't resist musicians and men can't resist her. I hear one quick shower, one quick tooth brushing, and nothing else. No wine cork popping, no talking, no laughter, no music. Then I heard kissing and make out noises. Maybe sex, who knows?

This is barely a week after the breakup text.

She brings this douchebag to the home I grew up in in, to the house we had such a great summer in?!

Are you fucking kidding me?!

This chick sure doesn't wait long. I walked outdoors to listen to them outside of their window. Yup. They were making out or fucking or something. And in the little girl's room, not even the master bedroom. Should I storm in on them or leave them be? We are kind of broken up, aren't we? But in the house I grew up in? During a month I had still paid rent on? She didn't have the common courtesy to at least go fuck him at his house?

Ah fuck it. I go invade. I still have the key.

Every door was bobby trapped with pieces of a drum kit she had never assembled since she moved in. In opening the front door, I send a cymbal clattering across the room. She stormed out of the bedroom, thankfully wearing a negligee and not completely naked. Although who knows. Maybe it was already up around her neck as she bobbed up and down on his cock. “We’re broken up blah blah blah” she said. I dashed past her and flipped on the lights of the 6 year old girl’s bedroom of their conjugal bliss.

Some shirtless dorky half-bald 30ish guy looked sheepish and confused under the sheets.

I went down to greet them on the street, where they would have to pass on their way to her car. She jumped back when she saw me leaning on the garbage can. “I can’t believe you,” she spits. You can’t believe me?! Oh really? The dork walks by. “So,” I ask him “what band are you in?”

“I’m not in a band.”

“Oh. OK.”

They drove off. She must have gone to an open mike and said to herself: “I am so gonna fuck someone tonight.”

Before she brought that poor slob over, I had put the monkey on a chest of drawers in a

place you would see immediately upon entering the front door and put a black cap on it, one I had bought on our Pacific Northwest honeymoon trip. After I had smoothed over that one enraged email I sent, it seemed like we were about to part amicably, with some degree of mutual gratitude for what we had experienced, so I thought placing the monkey there like that would be seen as a whimsical gesture of reconciliation as we parted ways. Sunday morning after she drove off with her fuck buddy or whatever he was, I went down to there again during daylight. I found the monkey and cap thrown behind the piano.

Fuck you too, cunt.

I twisted its head off then and there and threw the two pieces in the kitchen garbage can. Let her see what she has done to our love and any modicum of respect I might have retained for her, that stupid psycho slut bitch.)

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: Monday, October 25, 2010 1:28 pm

I did not want to hurt you at any point. I am sorry about the weekend incident. I am sorry I caused you pain and I hope you and I both find happiness. I plan to sign a lease today. Because my daughter and I need to pack, pls let me know your plans with regard to where we used to live together so I can plan accordingly. I hope some time we can restore friendly communication if not friendship and I continue to wish you the best.



(I tried to leave it on a happy note.)

Date: October 26, 2010

From: Stonefruit

Subject: Re:

To: T.R. Ponchik

I won't be living down there and Landlady is eager to rent it out as soon as possible, so feel free to move out as soon as possible. If I happen to be at the house upstairs when you come by, don't worry, I won't bother you at all.

You were definitely sweet, sexy and fun, Ms. Black Belted!

You are one of the most exciting and gorgeous women it has ever been my pleasure to meet, let alone be with. I wish we could have hashed our differences out instead of ending it so abruptly but such is life I guess. I hope your new guy friend can give you what you thought was lacking with me.

Love,

Stonefruit

Date: October 26, 2010

From: T.R. Ponchik

Subject: downstairs

To: Stonefruit

Stonefruit,

Thank you for this note.

Thank you for the kind words.

I texted Landlady: tonight I will work on making the place presentable for showings, most likely moving out fully on Sunday.

I profoundly appreciate our relationship, past, present and future.

Hoping our communication remains open and we remain assets in each other's lives.

Text message from Stonefruit to T.R. Ponchik

Date: Wednesday, October 27, 2010

Burning the purple kine bud under a bridge...

Text message from T.R. Ponchik to Stonefruit

Date: Wednesday, October 27, 2010

How is everything, Stonefruit?

Text message from Stonefruit to T.R. Ponchik

Date: Wednesday, October 27, 2010

I've certainly been better

(She moved out slowly in phases over about a week, leaving the place in shambles and leaving tons of crappy furniture behind.

One time when she was downstairs with her Craig's List movers or where ever she found them, I saw one of them in the street below with a fishing spear that looked just like one of mine that I had in the back of the house. I don't know these people from Adam. I went to go challenge him and take it from him. "I wasn't going to take it," he whimpered.

Whatever. Another mover claimed it was his.

Without bothering to check if my two were still in the back, I said "This looks like one of the two I got in back."

"It was from my truck."

From his truck? Who takes spears along on a moving job? "I don't know you guys. I don't know if you are walking off with my shit. Spears are cheap. Take it."

"You better find out whose something is before you take it."

"Whatever."

The spear carrying idiot said "Quit looking looking out of the windows, you prick!"

Prick?! You insult me on my land, in my family home?! I got half a mind to pound you out and I haven't even been in a real fight since fourth grade.

But I let it pass.

And she left her rats there. Since that was one of the main reasons she said we had to break up, I figured they would be among the first things she would take to her new place. Nope. Instead, they were the very last. One time when her Craig's List movers were doing their thing and I was upstairs, I watched her fat 40ish female mover clean their cage. The little girl watched for a minute and then wandered off. The fat lady closed the cage. "I sure hope she closed it up tight," I thought but didn't double check on it because I wanted to give T.R. and her crew their space.

The next morning I'm drinking my coffee in the backyard, taking the air. Ah fuck my ass! The rat cage door is open down on the ground and there are rats everywhere! I grabbed the nearest bucket I could find and started chucking them all into it. I think I got them all except for one of the adult fuckers back in the crack of the wall they escaped to last time. Probably the goddamn mother and probably already pregnant again, fucked by her brother or son.

An old lady who lives next door, the matriarch of a three generation Chinese family living there called me by my name. "Your mom is trying to get in touch with you." She was still on the mainland dealing with her family's estate. "Those rats have been there all morning."

I told her "I think I got all of them but one." These rats have been nothing but a pain the ass the entire time we had them.

I called my mom and told her the rats got loose again and I think I got them all but one. My mom texted T.R. to the effect of "Your rats are loose. What are you gonna do about it?"

My mom told me T.R. texted back saying "I'll send somebody over to catch them."

I arrived on the scene in the afternoon again. There were cheetos all over the place around the cage. One baby rat was near the cage, still loose. I scooped it up and chucked

it in the cage.

One of the adults was still missing. She didn't fully recapture all of the rats that had escaped, on top of the job I already did for her in that regard. Since she had already left them unfed and unwatered for a week, and she or her minions had failed to recapture at least two (and God knows how many others still lurking around), there was no telling if or when she would be back to get them at all.

I made a judgment call. This was a public health hazard. A potentially pregnant rat and an unknown amount of inbred baby rats at large. A pet owner who is clearly not responsible. A neighbor was already peeved.

So I sealed off all of the cracks in the wall with concrete.

By this time we are already well into November, which she hadn't paid for. Instead of arranging to have her remaining shitty furniture taken away, she sent a Salvation Army truck to pick it up. Not surprisingly, she wasn't there to oversee their arrival. I left the door open downstairs and ignored them. They passed on all of it. It was all decrepit crap, like you might find on the street. In fact, that was probably where she found it.

When the Salvation Army truck left. I went downstairs to assess the situation. I saw a preprinted tag on the door handle. A box was checked off which read "We are unable to process these items due to (X) Furniture with stains and (X) Requiring repairs." They had

passed on all of it.

There were about seven or eight large pieces of furniture. Tables, chairs, a huge bookcase, a huge long chest of drawers, a bed, mattresses. Her Russian "maid," another killer find from Craig's List I am sure, had been lurking about downstairs the previous night. Of course, again, T.R. wasn't there to supervise.

Judging by what I saw downstairs the next day after Salvation Army left, I am not clear what if anything she had done down there. There was a pile of cloths and shoes on the mattresses. There was rotting food in the refrigerator. Tons of kitchen crap in the kitchen closets. The carpet hadn't been vacuumed. Her trademark glitter was everywhere. There were two things still hanging in the closet of her daughter's old room in dry cleaning bags. One was a nice raincoat. One was a simple and very lovely baby blue dress. I had an intuition it held great sentimental value for her. Why hadn't she taken it with her first thing then? Why were her fucking rats still here if she loved them so much and we had broken up over them?

She hadn't moved out on time. She hadn't overseen the last couple visits of her maid or movers. She hadn't overseen the arrival of Salvation Army (even though they left another tag on the door saying "Donor will be home"). She had left the place in shambles.

I was starting to get pissed. If she was willing to donate everything remaining in the unit to Salvation Army and they passed, well fuck it. That was that.

I started throwing it all off the lanai where we had grilled so often and fucked once or twice down onto the street below, chucking it in such a way as to maximize it exploding on impact. Within 45 minutes, I had created a huge pile of debris. Once everything was out of the unit, I went down to the street and smashed everything to splinters and tied and bundled it into neat little packages for the monthly "bulky pick up" garbage men to carry away.

This should have been her job but I was glad to be rid of her.

Her husband finally came that night to grab her rats. Not her. Her husband. He also took one of the five or six garbage bags I had made. Probably the one with the little blue dress. He tried to get my attention at the locked door, but I ignored him.

Another reason we needed to break up, one she had mentioned a few times, was because "I didn't like her music." True, she only had about 30 artists she liked and listened to a lot, while I had 200 gigabytes of mp3s on an external hard drive and 12,000 songs on my iPod, from all eras, places, and genres. Way vaster than her musical horizons to say the least. But of her 30, I dug 20. She turned me onto a lot of pop music I hadn't been exposed to before which I would up digging. And a couple of cool Russian bands. And we both came into the relationship loving Kanye.

One time she looked at my iPod. I told her to just pick something. "I don't know any of



these people.” Hundreds of artists. She was flustered. "There's too many! You give me more to love about you every day," she said.

When you are falling in love, sometimes it seems like every corny ass love song was written just for you. In my case it was Justin Timberlake's song "My Love." Along with about five or six other tunes, it became a major theme song for our honeymoon phase.

"If I wrote you a symphony just to say how much you mean to me.

*What would you do?*

If I told you you were beautiful, would you date me on the regular?

*Tell me would you?*

Well baby I been around the world, but I ain't seein' myself with another girl.

*Like you.*

I can see us holding hands walking on the beach, our toes in the sand. I can see us on the countryside, sitting on the grass lying side by side.

You can be my baby, making my babies, girl you amaze me.

We gotta do nothing crazy.

See, all I want is for you to do is be my baby."

"What's the point in waiting anymore, cuz girl I never been more sure.

*That baby, it's you."*

As all honeymoon phases have their theme songs, so too do the breakups. I went on a

massive Bob Dylan kick. I found an old demo of his I had never heard before, "Long Time Gone."

"You might see me on your crossroads when I'm passing through.  
Remember me how you wish too as I'm drifting from your view.  
I ain't got the time to think about it, I got too much to get done  
because I been a long time comin' and I'll be a long time gone."

We haven't spoken since that last text and I doubt we ever will again.

It is hard to suss out just what the fuck happened. Best I can figure, I caught the benefit of a three month manic cycle with this hot bi-polar psycho slut and the tragedy of the beginning of a depressive cycle.

"Fare thee well," like she said on her Facebook wall? Bob Dylan has a killer break up song where he goes "Goodbye is too good a word, babe, so I'll just say fare thee well." It worked for me breaking up with my Texas girlfriend a decade ago but not for this one.

I hate to contradict the Bob, but in this case "fare thee well" is too good a word so I'll just say - nothing, except for that last poem and this short story.

I've done a whole heap of traveling over the years. I've been all over the world several times. I've hitchhiked back and forth and up and down all across North America more

times than I can even remember. I know what a crossroads is. I seem to have lived there my whole life, literally and metaphorically. I have been there a million times.

I know the way the wind blows a rusty metal sign back and forth slowly on its creaky post.

The old small town crossroads. No people, no traffic no more. Everything has moved out onto the interstates and the Walmarts at the edge of town.

An old school crossroads is even lonelier now than they used to be back in the day. You half expect a tumble weed to blow by, even if you aren't in West Texas or New Mexico.

Lonesome. Lonesome traveller. Lonesome traveller traveling.

That has been much of my life until now. That seems to have been my way, my path, my gift, my curse, my blessing, my aptitude.

I thought this girl would help take me out of all that. I thought this girl and I could build a future together. I thought we might make a self-sufficient little homestead together, one ruled by a few simple ideas: "maintain aesthetics, allure, discipline, fabulous posture, and practicality at all times."

Fuckin' A! Can't go wrong with those!

I saw an adorable cottage being built by our own hands. I saw a beautiful garden being tilled. I saw little bambinos running around in the tall grass. I saw contentment. I saw an idyll.

I thought that was what we had coming up. I was relieved. I was excited. I had finally found the right girl to take to the land. We were going to build a life together. We were gonna make it.

I was madly in love.

But she was clearly troubled, wildly troubled. She was, as the Hopi say, "koyaanisqatsi": out of balance. Just like the technological world she was so obsessively connected into.

I thought I could help her and make her mine for the rest of my life. I ain't no patron saint of troubled chicks or lost causes but I wanted to be her lover, her protector, and even her nurse. Most of all, I wanted to be her best friend and she mine. Forever. Maybe nature, village life, hard physical labor, and gradual detachment from electronics would help cure her of her mental ailments as well.

Maybe. I guess not, as it would seem.

We only go around once on this crazy blue marble of ours. We might as well find a good

mate and stand by them shoulder-to-shoulder through thick and thin. Especially with the shit storm headed our way.

Especially now that my family has land. Not only land, but land in a community with people who care about us. Even though Hillary Clinton has turned into Lady Macbeth, she had it just right when she said "it takes a village."

A man alone doesn't stand a chance. A family alone has a tough row to hoe. A village? With the right people, the right skills, and the right natural environment, they have got a fighting chance. Maybe even more than that. They are probably gonna make it just fine.

That's what I thought we had. That's what I thought we were both moving towards together. I was wrong.

As I began to inhabit my new role as an alpha male after a lifetime of feminism, did I veer off into domineering asshole territory? I am sure I did. After spending money like it grew on trees during our honeymoon phase, did I become a whiney bitch about how I had been living off my savings all year? No doubt. Did she ever come to me with any of these concerns before she wandered off AWOL?

No fucking way.

Did she clutch? Did she "mean what she said?" Was she "leading me on?" Did she "mean

it when she said it and therefore she wasn't lying?"

Did she even know what the fuck she was doing?

I don't know. Does it really matter? These things happen. When we had that calm conversation about potentially breaking up right before I left, I was completely ready to pull the trigger. But coming from out of left field like that a couple of weeks later was a real kick in the stomach.

If she had come to me with her issues and tried to talk to me about them, if she had dumped me in person or at least by phone, if she hadn't have fucked someone within a week of dumping me, if she had ended the relationship with any modicum of class, I might have taken her back, even with all of her baggage. But she didn't, so I won't.

In the end, all we can do is pick up the pieces and move on.

She was a lot like my other sexually charismatic flings: CW the belly dancer, KG the painter, SC the carbon credit trading executive. They all wandered off after a short while too. Because they could. They were hot and accomplished.

She has about 5-10 more years of sexual charisma that will allow her to keep wandering off at the first sign of boredom or frustration. After that, she will have to start working shit out with whoever she is with. Which she doesn't have the inner resources to do.

Honestly, if she makes it to 40 years old without killing herself or becoming permanently incapacitated, I will be surprised. Maybe she can make it as a cranky fat lesbian.

I know it is corny to say you have "to love like you've never been hurt." But you do. Again and again. Every time. Sometimes a tired wilted cliché is a tired wilted cliché because it is also a miniature poem of ancient wisdom.

I was sure I wanted to go all in. Not because I did not see the warning signs and the red flags. I surely did. But because I knew, good or bad, this would be one hell of a ride. I wanted to put as much on the table as I needed to see all of her cards. It wound up being a lot. She didn't lay down the hand I might have hoped to see. I lost. But she did not win either.

It has been a strange year.