

1

Sunday, December 11, 1994  
2:20 p.m.

Hello test test is anyone there?

Name: Valerie Vilson  
Age: 26  
Height: 5'5"  
Weight: 121 pounds  
Rank: knave  
serial number:

OK Greg says to quit fooling around now so he can show me something. Ho ho.  
On the computer, that is.

\*

11:15 p.m.

OK but really.

We just spent the whole day fooling around with this computer and now it's mine. I didn't want it but G. more or less insisted, twist my arm. Didn't want to take it back with him, I'll need it more than him, so on and so forth. So I'm going to record everything here and in a way it will be like sharing it with him. I'm not going to hit the backspace key or anything. Just pour it all out onto the page, spelling grammar who cares. The point is it's a way to feel connected to him.

Still can't understand why he's leaving. How many times the same conversation, offering and being refused, suggesting other ways, night jobs, anything. Will. And always: "I shall \*not\* be beholden," in his Serious Actor voice but with the eyes to prove he means it. And "Feh!" when I mention Will.

Strange. It's been eight, 9 months and I still know so little about him. (What's with the whole Will thing?) And now committing to go long distance. Some people marry two weeks after meeting. I wonder if G. and I are still strangers or if maybe now we're acquaintances with each other's psyches.

Does anyone really ever know anybody? Maybe it's impossible and doesn't really matter. Feh.

I hate this time of year anyhow, everything all dead and the ground just bleak and naked, no snow to cover it ... exams and presents and manufactured jollity. And now just five days and then he'll be what 200 miles away.

Still. He could be going to New York.

\*

12/12, 120

2

11:40 p.m.

Extremely tired. Came home from rehearsal to find Briana still up and chatty, G. is here, beers all around. Talked about taping a couple of short scenes before he leaves, Briana's auditions -- after that diatribe about Shakespeare being dead now she wants to be in Hamlet, I swear I can't keep up with her, then she's off to bed considerably so G. and I can go to bed too.

G. wants to make lots of tapes, not just with Briana. He's taping me now from the bed. I must look like a zombie here in the dark.

\*

12/13, 122  
10 p.m.

The agency called. It's all been arranged. I'm going to meet my real parents.

I have a sister who's 18.

2:10 a.m.

How the hell did I get from Mountain Home, Arkansas, to Bill and Marlene in St. Louis?

There's too much in my head.

\*

12/14, 120  
6 p.m.

Almost slept through the exam. Way too preoccupied to do well anyway: G. is packing, Briana has plans for a party Friday, the school Xmas performance is Sat. Rooth will be in St. Louis and wants to get together. And

*And* of course there's the matter of Mountain Home. Who are they? What will it be like? An agency rep is going to go with me, just to make it even more weird. Mountain Home looks small on the map. Over 200 miles from St. Louis, how? Bill and Marlene have been there forever. Maybe Judy and Frank -- excuse me, Mom and Dad! -- were in St. Louis once, or something.

Mom and Dad.

I haven't told Briana about this, don't know why. When I first decided she was back in Texas and then I don't know the time just never seemed right ... maybe I need her not to know about it, maybe I need the space. Maybe after I meet them. If all goes well.

If?

A squabble with G. seems minor with all this other stuff going on. I guess it would be fairly minor in any circumstance, but ... I got a card from Will and Jennifer and as expected G. smirked when he saw it. I just casually asked him what was between them anyhow and he laughed and said "oh you know ... if you're the youngest you put up with a lot of s\*\*\*."

I asked what he meant and he just shook his head not looking at me and went over to the computer (we were here) and began playing with scraps of code, not talking, getting all creepy in that way I can't stand. I went out and sat with Briana watching TV for a while and then G. came out and sat next to me on the sofa and took my hand and squeezed it, hard. At the next convenient moment we slipped away. Why is sex more electric with anger added in? I've never noticed it before but with G. something happens. I can feel the air crackling and taut and his rage is like a conductor and it's all going right up into me. He was snarling. I don't know if I was terrified or enthralled. Maybe both.

Maybe it's all because he's leaving.

4/15, 115  
midnight

Greg Giblini is sleeping in my bed for the last time. For a while anyway.

He has very long eyelashes which are red like his hair. Lying on his right side, head resting on his upturned arm, the left hand was over my hip before I scooted away and now dangles on the sheet. His breathing deep, steady, rising falling. The skin of his chest is so smooth.

Tonight he showed me some clips from the past couple of days. It was eerie and beautiful and not for the first time I was thankful to have been admitted into his thoughts. His mind is so amazing. He goes into the reaches few explore ... I have glimpsed a little of what he strives for.

Please. I want him to stay there, sweet sleep. This moment will last with me for a long time.

\*

12/17, 118  
10:30 a.m.

Ugh. The Advil hasn't kicked in yet.

Last night was a bit too wild. Briana ended up dancing on the kitchen table and nearly broke her ankle when she jumped off. Annie took her to the hospital, the ER guys must see this kind of thing all the time and roll their eyes. Anyhow I spent most of the time sitting on the sofa with a vodka bottle being slightly unsociable, although I talked at length w/Joey about this and that, acting stuff. (what's new?) Anyhow the reason

Briana is so jazzed about this Hamlet is that the new hotshot director-in-residence is doing it trussed up all postmodern, Joey told me her name but obviously I wasn't too impressed because I can't remember. Not my thing.

We also bitched about the schedule for Dirty Work. Was Rickard a genius or what to have the performances 2 weeks after classes start again in January? That's going to be some grind, nothing is ready, big craziness ahead. And Brown is coming to opening night. But maybe everything will turn out OK. Still I think I'm ready to just put my head down and finish up here ... maybe no other productions next semester, just the coursework. I'm feeling ready for something else.

Joey was also trying to pry into me and G., asking what the situation was now that he's gone and so on. I tried to ignore him and not be too flattered, maybe he wasn't coming on to me but it sure seemed like it.

Received a card from G. which he must have put in the mail ahead of time. Simple and sweet. He should be in Nashville tonight.

Now to bustle about backstage at the school ... shaking all those parents' hands and hoping my breath doesn't reek too much of alcohol while they tell me what a good influence I am on little Timmy. Ho ho.

\*

12/18, 121  
1:30 a.m.

I haven't even packed yet.

Briana is gone, which is sort of a relief ... it's just nice to be alone for a while to catch my breath quietly. I gave her Thy Name is Woman: Shakespeare and the Politics of Gender and Subversion, which sounds godawful but right up her alley if she's going to go for Hamlet. She loved it. And of course lots of chocolate everywhere from and to everyone ... why does Christ being born mean we all eat enough to gain 5 pounds?

Missing G. We talked this morning. He seems OK although a little dazed -- it's finally hitting him that he's there to stay, no coming back after New Year's, no next semester, just a wide open void. It doesn't bother him too much -- he definitely *enjoys* staring into the infinite unknown -- but this particular version is new to him. He's making some tapes so I can see where he is. Maybe I will send him this file on disk ... or just read to him into a cassette. It was strange to think that for now I'll be having a relationship with a largely disembodied voice on the phone. I am going out with a voice. Not at all satisfactory.

So much is going to happen before I next type here. I wish I could take the computer home ... no, I don't want this diary to be too much of a crutch. I'll just write it down the old-fashioned way.

Scared of what's waiting in Mountain Home.

\*

January 3, 1995!, 123

10 p.m.

Where do I start?

God.

I can't even write (type?) that any more without feeling sick.

No. I won't give that to them.

God God God God God God God God God God God God

Start with the easy stuff. All seems well here. Briana even has a tan. Rehearsals are better than hoped, long and difficult, which is good in my present state of mind. Two classes and the last throes of the big paper. That's all. Then I'm done.

Focus. Yes. Don't think about all that nasty chaos in the wings ... keep your eye on center stage. G. would want me to watch the wings, but I can't.

Rooth is good too. We talked for a long time. I even told her about them.

No, I just can't do it

\*

1/5, 124

10:40 p.m.

G. has a scheme. He's going to work as a film production assistant for whoever's in the area ... he's sending out letters and getting in touch with the local TV people, getting the word out. If it works he'd be on the road most of the time. He's also writing code, something with video. He says it's "our program" although I have no idea what he's talking about ... I just looked over his shoulder. Anyhow. HE sounded good and eager and seems to be out of the funk of Xmas.

He said he's making a lot of tapes. With who? I try not to think like that but I can't help it. It's so easy just to slip down into doubt. I can hear it in his voice too, sometimes he quavers and bristles when Joey comes up or when I mentioned being recklessly drunk the night he left. Of course there is nothing to fear but the fear is there very enticing and easy. It's harder to hear the truth. truth.

Ten days from now the Dirty Work, ha ha, will be over ... it's all looking better, tightening up. Lee is doing amazing things, deeply affecting. I have made it a habit to spend time looking at the statue in the square after rehearsal every night, thinking things over, coming down a bit. Shivering and trying to fathom the origin of hatred.

But it's not hard at all ... I have no farther to look than my own family.

I still haven't told Briana. It's not really something to be proud of.

I can still say that Bill and Marlene are my parents. I was brought up with their way of life, their ideals. Biology means so very little. And yet sometimes I wonder

no not now. too tired

3:30 a.m.

I can't sleep so I'm just having a little drink and finally maybe I can type and face the facts here

3:40 Where is Greg?

3:50 perhaps a game of association would help let my thoughts drift a bit more pleasantly

flower lilies death of christ

no

pizza hunger G. darkness monsters

no

art statues slaves whips flies in wounds

he belted her

right in front of me

slithering out of the loops of his detestable slacks with one jerk of his hand doubling the end back to the buckle and smacking her thighs with the double thickness of leather and the red marks and she's biting down hard on nothing not wanting to give him the satisfaction of a sound

and it is satisfaction oh yes his eyes are hot and moist and his face is ruddy with ardor for the beating those lovely legs she is supposed to be ashamed of

and mother standing by looking her arms tight against her chest dowdy terry bathrobe -- it's 11:30 that's one half hour too late missy where were you?

he's a lawyer and she was a nurse and their house is pretty and our daughter will go to the best college and they hate and hate and hate everyone blacks jews the president somewhere they turned their back on it all decided that God is vengeance not love

they claim to love their daughter but they have killed her I looked at her and saw me saw death in her eyes dead going out with brawny pigs who probably date rape her in the car out by the swamp and then tell her it's her fault for looking so pretty because she is so pretty so frail so crushed and whipped head down clear the table do your chores dutiful daughter preparing to be a dutiful wife counting the cracks on the ceiling is that love?

oh God is this really where I came from?

I could see them appraising me an actor unholy mother said she'd heard all about Hollywood and couldn't say she approved of the lifestyle out there

framed prints of scripture written in bright menacing calligraphy no pets no room to move or breathe statuettes of praying children

they didn't want to talk about me about adoption all they would say is it was back before they'd found the true path before they were married living in St. Louis I guess he went to law school there

and now they beat their daughter for it

and do you go to church Valerie why don't you go to church shaking their heads she is lost, she is doomed

I gave her my address and phone and told her to call I think she understood that I could help

G. met me halfway and I couldn't stop crying lying together on that cheap motel bed halfway from Nashville and crying crying the pillow is damp snot everywhere and he is just listening and holding me watching me cope with the world not being what it seems beauty love underneath it all is hate fear rage

and I know he was watching me he wasn't FEELING IT WITH ME no empathy compassion co-feeling because he already knew and so he was just watching me pushing the limits and stumbling into dark places he's already frequented

god sometimes I wonder

\*

1/6, 121

9:46 p.m.

I read over what I wrote/typed and it seems crazy. When I woke up I saw I'd finished off a third of a bottle of whiskey while I was typing. It's true that my birth parents are hateful extremists. Purity is their caged daughter.

The rest was garble.

So tired.

\*

1/7, 120

11 a.m.

After all that, this morning who should I get a letter from but Judith Felton, that is, my biological mother? Lined stationery with flowers and big-eyed does and butterflies decorating the margins. I can see her sitting at the kitchen table, her eyes squinting behind those big squared-off glasses and her hair crinkling with

disapproval, lips frowning, for it's surely with a heavy heart that she wrote me ... Purity applied to Ole Miss and wants to see it, and they can't get away, so would I be her escort for the day?

She'll arrive Wednesday evening and leave Thursday afternoon -- the worst possible time for me but I'm so excited! This is my chance to help her get away. To really talk to her. I immediately phoned back and said I would be so happy to help ... trying not to sound too eager ... trying not to be surprised when Frank spouted lines of scripture as he exhorted/warned me to take good care of her. (Judy closed her letter with a passage from Corinthians.)

Other communique of note: Will called. He hasn't heard from Greg for a while and wanted to know if I had any news. We ended up talking for a while. I don't know him well enough to pry into family matters but I want to know what's between them. Will seems perfectly nice, in a safe sort of way. I even told him a little about Mountain Home and he was sympathetic and warm. Why is G. so derisive of him? Will said we should come to California some time and visit. It sounds nice. Maybe on spring break.

I'm feeling refreshed. The path ahead seems a clean bright arrow.

\*

1/9, 118  
8 a.m.

G. was here. He got here Sat. night. He just dropped in to surprise me.

Love. Joy.

Heaven.

\*

1/10, 117  
11:40 p.m.

I haven't felt so alive in weeks. G. was amazing.

We talked about Mountain Home a lot or rather I talked and he kept me talking and taped me which felt okay. I was so out there, kind of high and dazed with everything I had seen and the ideas I was trying to grasp.

I mean, what if they hadn't given me up, and that had been my life?

I must be the only person in the world who's thankful to be adopted.

G. will be working this weekend so he wished me luck early. He's got a stint with a documentary team ... they're going out TO Al Gore's hometown. It sounds so good for him and yet I wish sometimes that he were still here. Does that make me selfish?



Too much time mulling things over, too much time in this diary -- I've read it as I scrolled past and the analysis makes me tired. Who am I, Laura Palmer?

I'm feeling so grateful now I am even grateful for these horrific cramps and the bloat. And so I want to be outside gulping down the cold air. And being ready for tomorrow and the play and real life.

\*

1/12, 120  
2 p.m.

Purity is safely on her way home. Everything is as bad as I suspected.

\*

1/15, 117  
8 p.m.

I'm going straight to bed after this. I seem to be coming down with a flu.

The play was great. After opening night I met Larry Brown and he complimented me, everyone complimented me every night, Will even called from California. G. sent a telegram. A good writeup in the Eagle and the Jackson papers and even the weekly in Biloxi. Possibilities abound, maybe a tour? after the semester is out.

It was hard work but what is sapping my strength is Purity. The weight of her life is on me, the way her pretty face twisted with tears in the cafe near the bus. SO pretty, so dead, spirit bludgeoned beyond recognition. She just sat twisting her Kleenex around her fingers. She couldn't come out and say anything and she was ashamed to be crying and it was an ugly spiral of a scene.

All of this was learned/taught -- the shame and timidity.

I don't really know what she thought of me or if she ever wants to see me again -- when we dropped by the theater and I gossiped with friends so casually and vulgarly was she shocked and dismayed? Or did it give her hope?

4? a.m.  
Oh God oh GOD

belt snapping fists blurred in the air dad is beating beating and I am trying to pull him off her trying to keep him from kicking and mauling with his righteous fury

I am approaching from behind his crisp white button down shirt back is so clean and bright in the dark and her twisted body beyond beneath

and when I wrench him around by the shoulder I can feel the smooth cotton his face is snarling orgasmic with fury and I realize I know that face it's not who it seems it's GREG

\*

1/18, 115

3 p.m.

I'm feeling a little better. I've had a fever, terrible fever dreams but especially the one I wrote down, over and over, and by now when the dream starts I know what's going to happen and there's this terror building even as it happens the same as ever.

\*

1/19, 117

9:30 p.m.

G. is back in Nashville and well. He said he had a great time on location and wouldn't stop talking about his supervisor, some woman named Louise, and all of the good career advice she gave him. "I don't know if I want to hear this," I joked (sort of joked), and immediately G. said "don't project, Val"

what the hell was that?

I asked him about it and he retracted ... said he missed me, missed my calls. I told him it was difficult with him being gone, and now he's thinking of getting a cellular. I'm still a bit irked. What, am I supposed to trace him? I'm not sure how to respond to this.

A thank-you note from Mountain Home arrived while I was sick. Blessed are the pure of heart and so forth and so on. In gratitude for my stern stewardship, ho ho, they've asked me to come stay with them for a weekend, so we can talk about my salvation. Apparently as things stand now I'm headed for damnation. They don't even know the half of it. How do I turn them down?

Briana is still oblivious, learning Ophelia lines all the time. She thinks Purity is someone from St. Louis. I don't know why I keep lying! Do I even have a right to be morally offended by anything? I have so many petty sins of my own, this little lie and that.

\*

1/21, 119

2 p.m.

Fully recovered but still dreaming.

My mail is getting weirder by the minute. I got a letter from Will in CA, I don't know why. It didn't really say much, just sort of friendly, but I found myself pouring everything into the reply I sent. I just let go like I haven't in a while -- the suspicion with G., everything with Purity, classes, Briana and Ophelia.

I get so tired so fast.

A postcard from G. from the Grand Ole Opry with a verse he'd written in country song style -- missin' his baby etc etc

And a little gift from my parents -- a small framed portrait of Christ.

This has all the makings of lunacy. Or a sick miniseries, take your pick.

\*

1/22, 120

11 a.m.

After another cast party, this time for Annie who was doing Brian Friel. Guinness, and way too much of it. Pure escapism. Joey asking me to come home with him, why did I see this coming? I said no and he left alone. A very small part of me wanted to go with him and I'm a little scared to admit that ...

admit what? that the physical element matters, not just sexual but the pure comfort of another warm body.

The only thing to do is make like Heloise and channel that energy elsewhere, like how about school? There is a whole act of Marat/Sade to be worked out for Gold's class ... we're all directing collaboratively and it's just chaos. Theory to read, new fun for the kiddies ...

Or Purity. She called yesterday just as I was crafting a gentle "no thanks" note to her parents.

*our* parents

Are you coming? she said.

Well, I don't know. (fumbling as ever)

I really liked talking with you and I'd like it, she blurted.

I wondered was she alone calling me furtively or was this a staged thing her parents were forcing her into?

Only one way to find out.

I'd love to come, I said. I'll be so glad to see you again.

What have I gotten myself into?

\*

1/23, 119

9 p.m.

G. called and said accusingly he'd called before and no one had picked up. He's at home for the moment. He's coming this weekend.

Again not great timing and I guess it's my turn to visit him but it can't be helped. It will be good to talk things over ... he's acting a bit worrisome

Ill will seems to be in the air. Everyone is so rude. In the square tonight a shouting match between a driver and a bicyclist -- harsh language and hostility leaping and arc-ing between them. I doubt it was necessary to use so many obscenities. I'm feeling a bit hypersensitive to all this. noticing all the little slights which snowball into this general lack of integrity and respect.

\*

1/24, 119

10 p.m.

I got another letter from Will. He tried so hard to be *with* me, to empathize, put himself in my place and write and ask other questions. He seemed especially interested in Purity and what is happening with her.

He didn't comment much about G. though. I was hoping for more, maybe a little insight into their own story? He did acknowledge that G. is a special case and has a mind of his own, whatever that means. It's nice to know someone who knows G. at least as much as I and understands what I mean.

He's unhappy with his wife. I want to help him like he's helped me -- listen and offer up pure compassion -- but I feel so unsure. What do I know about marriage?

Will seems like the older sibling I've always wished for. What is between him and Greg?

\*

1/27

5 p.m.

Getting ready for G. Where will he take me this time?

And for Purity -- I go there next. I have decided that she should go very far away as soon as she can. Graduate high school and run. Maybe Will can help her in California. Ole Miss is too close.

\*

1/29, 118

9:20 p.m.

One weird weekend. I think we are okay now

Last night we sat in the square right near the statue and talked and it all came out. At one point we were both shouting at each other both in pure fear and suspicion -- I think I was asking "WHO IS LOUISE?" and he was saying "WHAT ABOUT JOEY?" and then just silence and then he just held my face in his hands and hissed, "God, you're everything to me, don't you understand?" and I realized he was on the verge of tears.

I have *never* seen him like that, never vulnerable -- he's always just been watching me from the outside -- but this time he was there with me, and even though it wasn't a happy place I felt grateful for something, that we were together maybe? We were just crying together for a while, feeling so horrible that we could feel so much for each other and still fall prey to obsessive mistrust. I understand now that we are all profoundly flawed. Why else would all this garbage exist, if we didn't let it?

And when we got back he asked me to talk to the tape about it ... I was lying on the bed already half asleep, barely wrapped in a sheet, and he was standing directly above me. It was creepy but I was dazed and I wanted him to know what I was feeling, and then I realized I was really turned on and I told him "put the tape away and f\*\*\* me" which he did and I was terrified by everything -- the fact I'd talked like that and the violence/intensity and that same raging face from my dreams. I almost screamed. We spent quite a while just looking at each other after that, him smoothing my hair so gently.

Today was gentle too. A peaceful departure. But I am still disturbed.

\*

2/1, 120

10:18 p.m.

We're going to tour Dirty Work through three states. I am preparing tapes and resumes. Acting and career seem straightforward compared to everything else.

This evening I helped Briana with her lines. It was good because we haven't spent much time together lately ... we seem to be growing apart a little. She is so into this role -- more death! -- and the student scene which I am ready to leave. "You and Greg are quite the lovebirds," she teased ... oblivious to the undercurrents. Which is fine, but a change.

G. is gone again. Off to Memphis, someone doing an Elvis miniseries.

\*

2/3, 120

8:40 p.m.

Steeling myself for Mountain Home. In a way knowing what I can expect makes it worse. A joyous card from my parents, the book of Titus (??Titus?? who the hell was that?) about salvation and such. I am only going for Purity and I don't even know if she really wants to see me, or what. I feel like I'm flailing a bit and not looking forward to being worn down with Scripture.

Note to next of kin: If I'm ever brainwashed by these people, shoot me.

4?

no

the blood

frank  
 greg?  
 forgive  
 no  
 forest running  
 I can see them chasing  
 grab her  
 tear and shred her  
 and now me  
 reaching for me  
 no  
 God  
 no  
 the statue a weatherman a forecast  
 no  
 don't please  
 greg  
 no

\*

2/5  
 11:50 p.m.  
 Purity *did* want to talk to me.

Yesterday we went to the movies unaccompanied by her parents -- the result of hard maneuvering by P. who also turned down a date with her brute ape of a boyfriend Jake. But she didn't seem to know what to do once we were alone, just desperate silent looks. I didn't know what to do either so we ended up just driving to the theater conversing stupidly and seeing something insipid. Finally in the parking lot getting into the car when in midsentence she burst into tears. Keep driving, she said. We can't be late home. Screw that I said (note restrained language) and turned off the car. What's wrong?

I just wanted to talk to you so much, she said, and now time is running out. We have time now, I said. I was trying to hug her but the seatbelt was in the way fuss fuss and then when I finally put my arms out she looked as though she wanted to cower away. So I just put my hand on her shoulder. She just wouldn't stop crying and then she made me swear not to tell anyone. Finally:

I don't know what to do, she said. I feel so bad.  
 About what?

All this church stuff. Religion. I mean, I used to love it. I loved God. But now ... I don't know ... and then she was off again, these horrible anguished gulping sobs. I didn't know what to say -- I mean I knew what I *wanted* to say but I guessed it probably wasn't the right moment -- and I still didn't feel like I could touch her except for her shoulder which I was holding quite firmly now and I said what is it about religion that you don't like any more?

I don't know ... I see my mom ... I don't think that's what I want to be even though that's what Jake wants ... there are things I want, things I want to know about ... and I don't know why I have to be ashamed about it

What sort of things?

Oh everything, she said. She had managed to control her breathing and now amazingly she gave me a weak smirk, and: I'm a teenager, you know?

I nodded. I do know, I said gravely.

We just looked at each other for a while under the parking lot lights. Then I started the car -- I was trying to think how to say and finally I just said

There are lots of ways to love God.

And I told her it was okay to have questions and to read her Bible and see what was in there about love.

We didn't say anything else but when we got out of the car something in her eyes was alive, despite the puffy tear marks. Hopefully it won't flicker and damp out.

The rest is as I expected. I made up a story about stopping for ice cream on the way home and the next morning we dutifully went to church. Several vehement arguments between me and Frank, with Judith and P. on the sidelines, heads down.

\*

2/7, 123

11 p.m.

cramps are bad again. Maybe I'll get it checked out whenever I have the time, ha ha.

I wrote to Will to let him know what happened with Purity. Remote as he is, his letters are the sole bits of stability in my life. Everything else is murky and uncertain ...

G. sent me an old 45 of "Suspicious Pride". I am not sure what he's thinking. I told him about the weekend at Mountain Home and he said "very realistic story, Val." I almost burst into tears ... he's just not with me at all, off in his paranoid haze of possessiveness.

\*

2/11, 122

4 p.m.

Briana's brother David is here. Last night we had a little get together and I drank too much and almost lost myself

Why can't humans just be good?

Why were his eyes so warm and welcoming?

I hate this.

I want to go see G. but I can't miss more school more work anything and I don't know where he is anyhow.

I got a letter from the parents, responding to my thank you note. I also got a letter from Purity. You wouldn't have known both letters were referring to the same visit, the same family, the same life. Frank and Judith told me it's not necessary to thank them, their home is always mine whenever I need spiritual shelter, they hope I'll "come home to Jesus" more often, and so forth.

Purity wrote to tell me she's reading her Bible every night like I said. She wants to see me again. I could almost feel her desperate energy radiating from the page, casting outward, looking for a lifeline to grab.

\*

2/12, 116

11 a.m.

Last night we all sat around in the kitchen. We were talking about ghosts and then Briana suggested we play with a Ouija board because Annie hadn't ever done it. We lit candles and incense and got all giggly over it. David's fingers were touching mine on the little pointer piece and that made me even more giddy and then the weirdest thing happened. It worked. The power seemed to be coming from Annie because we all took our hands off but her and the piece was flying around the board.

We asked its name: Terence.

When did it die: 1862

How old: 31

How did it die: war

Is there reincarnation? Yes

How many lives do people have? 6

What life is Briana in? 2

What life is Annie in? 1

What life is Nick in? 4

What life is Valerie in? 6

Will Valerie and Greg last (Briana asked this): No

How much longer?: 7 weeks

Will Annie and Keith last? (Annie asked): Don't know

Are there UFOs (David asked this): Yes

What side did you fight on: Grey

I asked why: why not

Then Briana asked whether it had any messages for us:

VAL

LOOK OUT STORM

(I almost fainted because of the dream)

Is there a heaven?: Yes

Are you in heaven?: No

DO you know the future?: Yes

What is my future (Briana)?: Don't know

What is my future (Annie)?: travel



What is my future (David)?: Don't know  
 What is my future?: No  
 What does that mean?: No  
 Can't you give me a hint?: No  
 I must have been shaking or something because Briana asked the next question  
 before I could speak  
 Are you a good or a bad spirit?: F\*\*\* OFF  
 and then it was whizzing around again and David said we'd better try to  
 disengage  
 So we told it we were going now  
 nothing happened  
 we said it again and then it spelled: see you soon  
 and then it stopped. I was a little shaken up and so David just sat with me on the  
 couch for a while, just touching my face and massaging my temples, smoothing  
 the wisps of hair, and I fell asleep curled against him. Nothing else happened  
 although what we shared was very deep and strange.

I don't know what to think now. I'll readily admit there's quite a bit that goes on outside the realm of our understanding -- but this seemed a little too close to home. Maybe Briana knew a lot of it, but I didn't tell her the dream.

\*

2/14, 119

10 a.m.

I woke this morning to find Greg standing at the foot of my bed, all in black, 3 dozen scarlet roses filling his arms. He arrived at 6 and had just been standing there watching me sleep after driving all night.

I guess it's every romantic Cosmo girl's dream, but I almost screamed.

I almost screamed because last night I dreamed that a large shadow named Terence was standing right there, and he said Welcome to my mind and the voice was right inside my head and it was extremely real. I couldn't move or get away from it at all.

Of course I didn't scream but just sort of sucked in and he strew (?) the roses all around the bed and then lay on top of me on top of the white white sheets, clothed, and just touched my face and my hair so gently, my neck, and at first I was anxious because that's just how David was touching me A LITTLE TOO RECENTLY and I wondered if maybe he knew something.

But he just kept gently touching, and his face was open like in the square and just gazing at me gravely and one of my hands was free so I could touch his face too. The roses smelled so sweet. I closed my eyes and his fingers were over my hot tired eyelids and tracing my lips and then I wanted him everywhere and soon I was pushing up against his weight and whispering please and so he did.

When it was over I told him about Terence and he thought it was “remarkable” and he wanted me to write it down so I have. He seems worried ... maybe I’m looking a little frazzled, which I am.

More later.

\*

2/16, 117

10:08 p.m.

G. just left today. Things got very strange while he was here but I am too tired to talk much about it. I’m not sure we ever really connected or what.

\*

2/17, 119

6 p.m.

I’m a little scared. I don’t know what I’ve gotten myself into.

Purity is pregnant. Jake raped her.

Does the fact that I’d already imagined this scenario mean I’m just as evil?

She called collect from a pay phone and said I was the only person in the world who could help. I can’t even fathom that. That our tenuous connection would mean so much to her makes me want to cry.

It’s up to Purity to get here with clearance for an overnight stay ... the rest is up to me. We’re going to Jackson and then I don’t know where else just driving out and away. She needs to be back in time for church on Sunday.

I wonder if she is strong enough. But then I remember the little things: Dinner at Mountain Home, after Grace. We are talking about Purity’s achievements -- all of us except P. herself, that is, who is looking down at her plate. Her parents are saying they are so looking forward to her being in college at Ole Miss

“Berkeley is my first choice,” Purity said suddenly. Her voice clear and unwavering even though she was still looking down.

“Well is that a fact?” said Frank, slowly. I wondered where this was going

P. just nodded. Tingly silence

“I don’t expect you’ll get in easy,” F. said. “But then you’ve always been a fighter, haven’t you?” P. didn’t say anything. “HAVEN’T YOU, MISSY?”

He was looking at her hard and I just expected her to nod into her plate again but instead she snapped her head up and looked right at him and a lovely flush was climbing into her cheeks as she said “yes father. I have.”

"For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father'; and, 'He who curses the father, let him be put to death.' Matthew fifteen four." Case closed. F. began chewing again.

5:04 a.m.  
sobbing with a vague remembrance of a dream  
I don't want to contemplate

those people are MY PARENTS I have their DNA in me

and yet when I start meditating on evil/hatred I find it difficult to draw the line

\*

2/18, 119

10:52 p.m.

Just after that the phone rang and like magic it was Will. I don't remember what I said but I told him about my dream and Purity and we talked forever and by the end I was so tired, empty after dumping everything on him and thanking him for his Valentine even though it caused so much trouble which I also told him about.

"What is it with you two?" I asked.

Silence but I could tell if I waited he would say.

Finally he cleared his throat. And: "All through life we've kind of wanted the same things."

"But --"

"We just come at it from different angles, Greg is in the shadows I'm in the everyday world."

And then I was asking very quickly, erecting a barricade of question marks "And so? What is it you both want? What is keeping him so bitter against you? DO you want the code? Is it computers? Why can't you just get along? Why doesn't he have a problem with Tom?"

Silence. This time I knew it was the kind that he wouldn't break.

It's amazing how normal I appear. Mrs. Kelsey's fourth grade class is putting on a clown show for the Easter fair. Jarring, non?

\*

2/19, 118

11:19 p.m.

Greg was unsurprised to hear the news about Purity "If you can conceive of it, it will happen," he said. He didn't even apologize for the pun.

He wanted us to come to Nashville to do it but I said no and now he's angry. But I couldn't handle him and Purity together ...

Why?

Surely a good relationship is a comfort not a burden at times like this ... but with G. it has never been this way, why do I expect it now?

Because I've gotten to know Will?

\*

2/21

10 p.m.

As I passed the statue today I nearly bowled over a small stooped man. He was carrying a bright red umbrella. As I helped to steady him I said just to be conversational that he didn't need his umbrella today. He looked at me and said A STORM IS COMING

And then he shimmied around the other side of the statue and was gone. As in, vanished. There was a squirrel near the boot of the soldier but nothing more.

Sure enough, a couple of hours later big clouds rolled over that fine blue sky and it poured and cracked and split.

Needless to say when I told G. about this he found it interesting. He is in Nashville with plans to be there for a while, just when I am going somewhere else. I want to see him ... we are strangers, very much apart, I want to reestablish the connection before --

Before what? Before it's too late?

It makes me cry just to type those lines. I don't want this to happen. I want it to be good again. Please.

\*

2/22, 116

7:30 p.m.

Mail today: A blank postcard postmark blurred, Little Rock?

SEE YOU SOON

Not Purity's handwriting.

\*

2/23, 115

11:49 p.m.

G. called and it was more strange than I can handle. He talked to Will and something happened. I don't know what he wouldn't say.

I've got to see you, he said, and I could tell he was upset.

I can't. Purity is here. We're ready to go.  
F\*\*\* that.  
I can't.  
Can't?  
Can't we just talk about it here?  
No. I need to *see* you. Smell you. Chew on you.  
What's wrong?  
Please  
No. Tell me  
Just promise --  
Anything  
When it happens.  
What?  
Not Will. Anyone but Will.  
WHAT?  
Remember me, he said. I'll see you soon.

Why did he say that "see you soon" or maybe I'm just paranoid I mean lots of people say that maybe he meant well

I really hope I've thought of everything. Frank and Judith think I'm taking Purity camping. I even bought a permit @ Holly Springs I case they check.

If they find out.

I can't tell if she's scared or what. We have been talking around it. But she is stronger now. She sees the way out even if it means going through hell to get there.

And bolder: asking me about G. and what it was like. I wasn't sure what she meant -- sex? a long-distance relationship? psychosis?  
Love, she said. True love.  
I didn't have the heart to tell her I didn't know.

-- end of first file --