

Moon and Stars

by Katie Christensen

If I had one more day to spend with Adam*, I know that we would laugh. No, Adam isn't dead, nor is Adam debilitated in some fashion that we may not speak. At this point in our lives we simply don't. I loved Adam, not all at once, but I loved him and still do. Yes, he's a special kind of guy, which makes for a special kind of ex. Adam is my most recent ex, and I learned the most from our fiery relationship; it has made me a better person, a person I'd like him to meet.

Adam and I met under the most unusual conditions. I was freshly 21 in a long-term relationship making its way down the toilet. He was young, sheltered, and newly skinny. As a fat gamer kid, Adam, a 22-year-old man-child, rarely abandoned his mother's basement, and at 300 pounds he hadn't experienced much outside the safety and lavish attention from his mother. However, his mother was on her last bout with cancer, and when we met he had developed a zest for life and excitement for seeing the real world and trying new things. He had lost the weight, with his mother's coming doom, and had become quite the handsome young man. Adam had gotten his first job and was looking for his first special someone. He adored me. I came from a far off place called La Crosse, and I knew things, and I loved to adventure. He was from a small Iowa town. I was just the right kind of fun he was looking for. Everything I did and showed him left a smirk of admiration on his lips, and his eyes gazed at me with pure, joyous amusement. Oh, the way he looked at me; I was defenseless to his addiction to my Gypsy ways (he loved calling me a Gypsy) and thusly, we fell into each other.

Adam and I loved to laugh. He has the most beautiful, obnoxious, bellowing laugh. He may not be the smartest kid on the block, but boy could that guy make everyone laugh. A sense of humor is a quality I demand in my friends, and he has it. Even in our worst fights and stifling situations, we could find the silver lining, the hilarity in all of it. One time, at the very bitter end of our official relationship, we were fighting. I'm sure it was mostly me fanning the flames, and I was bitter this day. I was drinking a wine cooler I found in the fridge, no doubt to dilute my feelings or his stupidity, and he pissed me off. He made me so angry that I threw down my drink hard on the floor as to break it in such a climactic shock to end it all. However, it did not break. We stared at each other across the room in puzzled amazement. The glass did not break! I peered at him; he stared at me. I picked it up and threw it again! It still didn't break. Again, and nothing. By then we were both crying with laughter in awe that I was too weak to break that damn bottle but was angry enough to keep trying for the effect intended. After, we curled up on the couch together, and laughed about how funny the scene we were just in was, and we talked the afternoon away.

Sit and laugh and hug and stare, that is what we would do if I had one more day with Adam. Even if neither of us wanted to, that is what would happen on our day together. In all the times that we've hated each other, there is something, a spark, a shared respect and love that always trumps our anger. When we actually discussed our issues, we found a way to compromise, and always hugged long, strong hugs-- the kind of hug you give someone shamelessly, with no ego

to tear you apart, just a real hug. Adam had told me I was the one who taught him how to hug, really hug with no regard. He had thanked me for it. Eight hugs a day keeps the doctor away, they say (Zak, Stanton and Ahmadi). Adam gives credit most times, when credit is due, and I'm glad I could teach someone how to love, show love, and be loved. Seeing as we do not share the love we once did, on our day together, I would be sure to first say I was sorry.

I'd tell him how sorry I was, sorry for all the tantrums. With my bipolar disorder, and lack of care for myself at the point in my life that our relationship took place, I was not always the best or nicest person. I lacked restraint when I was off-the-walls upset, and for that, I am sorry. I would explain that I was sorry for ever projecting my feelings of failure in my own life onto him and not explaining thoroughly my disappointments when they were justified. I would apologize for my own lack of confidence, which led to failed communication between us, and my own lack of self-care that made me hard to live with. I would explain my sympathy to both of our younger selves for my lack of personal strength to have properly worked on our relationship and myself during the hard times. I would also tell him that I have forgiven him.

I would sit him down. I would hold his hand and look him square in those beautiful eyes and tell him he didn't deserve a lot of what I gave him. I'd certainly let him know he wasn't getting off as easy as having to take no responsibility at all, but I would be loving and sincere and let him know that through whatever had happened, I still love him. I love him for all that he is and all that he will never be. Adam would listen, maybe cry. I know I would. I am stronger, wiser, more stable, and less impulsive as I was way back when, and I would keep my composure. I think we both would appreciate knowing that love can still exist after a harsh, heart-dicing break-up.

I'd share with him all that I've learned from our relationship. I have learned more from the day I met him to the last day we ever saw each other than any one friendship or relationship thus far in my life. I would share with him the knowledge and wisdom I found through our faults and tribulations. After we parted ways, I really had to purge my mistakes out onto my mind's table and examine all I had done. I had to pick apart myself, my feelings and emotions, the realities of my life, and what could be salvaged to make me a whole person again. I learned to let go of the pride. I learned to stop equating my personal worth and value by the state of my romantic relationships. I learned how to live again without putting someone else as priority, to avoid looking into myself. I'd tell him I learned a lot with my time being single, and that maybe he should try it too for some personal growth. I would assure him I am no longer mad, but thankful for the amazing times we shared and the lessons I have learned from *us*. I'm not as sad as I once was about us, and I am very happy with myself, my personal life, my achievements, goals, and struggles. I have been reintroduced to myself, and for the part he took in forcing me to have this reintroduction, I guess I owe him some thanks. I am wiser now to how my words cut or cure. I know better now how to approach tough situations with friends and family, and just how important it is to think before I speak, and make sure my words are what I mean because I have a lot of power within me to do good and also to harm. I also will remember for my next relationship endeavor that things cannot be forced, and I will never date someone loving that person for their potential, in waiting for their greatness to shine through. I must accept the next

person for exactly who they are then, in their entirety. Loving on expectation of unused potential isn't fair for either parties, and usually ends prematurely. I've learned so many necessary lessons that have aided in my personal growth from Adam and my relationship. I would smile at him and thank him for being a part of my life in one of its pivotal stages, even if he couldn't stay for the encore performance.

I'd rattle off all of the great things I have done and am doing now for him. I'd tell great stories of happenings that he had missed while we've been adrift. I most definitely would think of all the best and funniest tales to tell, that I have been waiting so long to share with him because I know he would just die laughing. I would tell him that I am going onto my second year at Western Technical College for something I whole-heartedly enjoy, and that now I have a nice apartment where I live alone and I do whatever I please. I'd show him all my plants, as I have many more than when we lived together, and I'm sure he would be unimpressed. Adam isn't a plant guy, he's a video game guy, but to no matter, I would fill his ears with plant knowledge. I would take him around town as we talked and show him all the trees and fill him with facts he'll never use. I would explain to him, and no doubt it would go to his head, that none of what I have would be the way it is without him. I wouldn't have a job in my desired field, I wouldn't have a year of additional schooling under my belt, and I wouldn't have my nice apartment to myself. Without our relationship and break-up, I would have probably been content enough bartending to put off school, travel or moving for another few years, and simultaneously continue to stunt my personal growth. Whether for good or bad, our relationship meant something to me; he meant something to me, and only good has come from our demise.

Though he no longer tucks me in, or calls me his 'moon and stars', nor do I greet him at any door with any hug, and no 'I love yous' are ever exchanged, I carry a little of Adam with me wherever I go. That is all the more of him I want these days, and I have filled the void I thought was left by him with qualities of my own I had been neglecting. It will not be likely that I jump into any relationship soon, in the meantime I will hold on the good memories and the way I felt in our hugging embrace.

Work Cited

Zak, Paul J., Angela A. Stanton and Sheila Ahmadi. "Oxytocin Increases Generosity in Humans."

Plos One. 7 Nov. 2007. Web. 8 July 2014.

*This name has been changed to protect privacy.