

# Dear Old Love!

## HAPPY ENDING

**I'm so glad it didn't work out the way I wanted it to.**

## ADVICE

Mother told me, "Don't buy the first coat you try on." So I broke up with you. But in retrospect, I think she was talking about coats. Sorry.

## PELTED

I'm consoled by the fact that the two of you will have very hairy children.

## IT'S NOT YOU

**Yes, we had good sex. I have good sex with everyone. That's me.**

## BLUE RULES

Putting ketchup in a bowl, no drinking from cans because you'll cut your lip, special slippers for guests. Being at your mom's house was like those crazy laws from the 1800s that say you can't walk a duck on a leash in Pennsylvania.

## BIG SOLO

When I play air guitar, you're my air audience.

## BOWLED OVER

I can't believe I miss hearing you yell "Now that's what I'm talking about!" after bowel movements you were particularly proud of.

## U OF YOU

**You were the only worthwhile thing I studied in college.**

## TONIGHT'S SPECIAL

I never tired of looking at you over the tops of menus.

## DOPPIO

Since you left, I still make two cups of coffee in the morning. I drink both of them.

## FLAKE

I'm dreading the first snowfall, because I'll have to remember a Sunday, white sheets, and pillow creases on your face.

## XMAS

**The earrings were nice. But what I really wanted was an orgasm.**

## HEY BABY

**If all I cared about was producing a genetic masterpiece, I would've stayed with you.**

## LAB WORK

You taught me how long I can handle a relationship based solely on sexual chemistry. Seven months.

## SHHHH

I would have been happy with our secret love affair forever. We could have secretly moved to California and had secret jobs on a secret vineyard.

## LOVE IN THE TIME OF LUNESTA

They set us up because we both have trouble sleeping. That should have been a sign.

## PET PEEVED

**I don't care that you miss my dog. When you cheated on me, you cheated on him, too.**

## GO BALD ALREADY

*I hate the idea of you keeping all your hair and not being able to touch it whenever I want.*

CLASS NOTES

*You should publish an alumni newsletter for everyone you've dated. I'd like to see what my colleagues are up to. We're a good group.*

MISSING MISS

*Your maiden name lives on hard in my fantasy world.*

MRS. HIM

***I still use your last name when I doodle my future signature.***

IS THIS YOUR FLOOR?

***I smelled your perfume on an elevator and it took me back ten years. An old woman dressed like a teenager was wearing it.***

MEGAPIXEL REGRET

*I wish we'd invested in a better camera. And used it.*

UNSUBSCRIBED

*A woman called for you yesterday. I started to tell her off, but she was just selling subscriptions to The Chronicle.*

SO CLOSE BUT YET

*Why are you my best friend, and not my best husband?*

MAGINOT LINING

***Remember in tenth grade when I said we should meet at Victoria's Secret, and you showed up with your friends? I was giving you a visa to the land of adult sexuality, and you tried to smuggle three doofuses across the border.***

OVERBLOWN

*You blew me all out of proportion.*

LUCKY STRIKE

*I have to believe our relationship continues to play out in all those particles of cigarette smoke we exhaled together.*

REST IN PEACE

***I always preferred your pillow. Now that it's mine I don't like it so much.***

RIBBED

*I wish we'd been close enough for you to go on the pill.*

TIED UP

*Your penchant for neck scarves makes me want to autoerotically asphyxiate myself by way of tribute.*

MOMENT OF CLARITIN

***I discovered the hard way that I'm allergic to your cat, your laundry detergent, and your deepest beliefs.***

PAGING MR. SNOTBORG

*I let you go because I couldn't stand your last name.*

IN MY LEAGUE, BRIEFLY

***Your laughter was music. Your eyes were jewels. Even your farts smelled like Shalimar. Thank you for rebounding off me.***

IDIOCRACY

*I still say you're an idiot for not falling in love with me.*

MEASUREMENT

CLASSIFIED

***I ran that Missed Connection notice looking for you for so long it became a regular feature, like those beret ads in the back of The New Yorker.***

TRADING DOWN

*You gave the impression that being with me was settling, which I was fine with, but then you didn't settle.*

SHAKE

*I could only get so stoned on the stems, seeds, and resin of your affection.*

LAMENT

*It's so hard to cyberstalk a technophobe.*

BALANCE

*I do not miss your drunken rages. I do not miss paying for everything. I absolutely do not miss your insane family, and I do not miss uncovering your many lies. However, I think of you often while masturbating.*

TOUGH JOB

***Every morning my boss asks if I'm all right. Every morning I lie.***

1-2-3-4-5

***Please change your e-mail password. I'm addicted.***

DRESS CODE

*You taught me: If he dresses like a douchebag, he's probably a douchebag.*

ONE NOTE

*I stopped talking to everyone who grew tired of hearing me talk about you. So now I don't really talk to anyone.*

TOUCHDOWN

*I root for the Giants because of you. My husband has no idea.*

IS THIS THING ON?

*I realized later on that our blowjob-centric sex belied deep issues about your experiences with intercourse. You were telling me you had problems and I didn't listen, even though you were speaking right into the mic.*

AS GOOD AS I GET

***You made me want to be a lesser man.***

COME BACK KID

*Come back from Tanzania. I want to get a cabin in a ski town and have babies with you.*

LOCATION, LOCATION, RELATION

***I could live in the same small town my whole life if you were there, too.***

REMEMBER HOMEROOM!

*You signed my ninth grade yearbook, "We could've used a girl like you at the Alamo." I've had a thing for you ever since.*

SOUR INVESTMENT

*You operated an emotional Ponzi scheme with many, many women, and I was the last to cash out.*

NUMBERS GAME

*I'm glad you were my fourth.*

WUV BITES

*You thought the way I pronounced certain words was cute. Now I feel like I have a speech impediment.*

BLESS YOU

*I'm still searching for someone with a stranger and more endearing sneeze than yours.*

MINUS ONE

*Iâ€™m still in love with you, and youâ€™re in love with every woman except me.*

SCOTCHED

*I was afraid if you got close, youâ€™d see the Scotch tape holding me together.*

UNHAPPY ENDING

***Then again, if you hadnâ€™t been a full-service masseuse, we never would have met in the first place.***

JUST FOR LUCK

*I wish Iâ€™d saved a few pairs of your underwear, to seal in a jar and keep on a shelf high in the pantry. Is that the sort of thing that makes you miss me, or glad itâ€™s over?*

SCRATCH THAT

***If Iâ€™d known I was only going to get one shot, I would have left more marks.***

E-LOVE BUT NOT IN LOVE

*â€œI love youâ€ doesnâ€™t count if you can only say it in e-mail.*

SNOW LEOPARD IS NEXT

*When I said you were the only boy I called Puppy, I lied. Iâ€™d been calling my boyfriends that since high school. I feel so guilty about it that Iâ€™ve switched to Tiger.*

SPELLING CUMULUS WITHOUT US

*You made all the clouds look sad.*

HELLO DARKNESS MY OLD FRIEND

*I held out hope that youâ€™d come rushing into the temple, tear down the chuppah, and declare your love for me right up until the moment I smashed the glass.*

EVEN I GET THE BLUES

*I kept all your Tom Robbins books.*

FORCING IT

*Ours was an Obi-Wan relationship. We struck it down, but then it became more powerful than we could possibly imagine.*

AT MY MIDDLE

***You never saw me at my best. Now Iâ€™m worried that maybe there is no such thing.***

TELL ME MORE

*I love how you always chewed gum when we had sex. It was like doing it with a â€™50s carhop.*

WAS I WRONG? DEPENDS.

*Because your father vowed to do everything in his power to break us up, and he did, I enrolled him in NAMBLA and flooded his mailbox with hairpiece catalogs and coupons for adult diapers.*

LOST AND FOUND

*I miss flea-marketing with you. You had a way of turning old junk into slightly less junky junk.*

BEAUTY SCHOOL DROPOUT

*Iâ€™m sorry I didnâ€™t trust you to cut my hair.*

CAMP SWEETHEART

***I know you only gave me a backrub because you happened to be standing behind me when the music stopped, but to me, at fourteen, it felt like fate.***

LINKED IN

*I held onto the jade cufflinks you gave me for the prom, forty-nine years ago. I just gave them to my son.*

BETTER LOVING THROUGH METAPHOR

**Dear Old Love,**

**Our relationship was like**

my singing voice way better in my head.

a jam band. It went on far too long and only made sense on drugs. Fun at the time, though.

a thriller that you can never read again because you already know the grisly ending.

a perfect pair of jeans that gets irreversibly cut off at the knees one hot summer day.

a great song that gets played so often you can no longer hear what made it great.

the idea for a National Service Corps way too much personal sacrifice involved.

an inflatable guest bed handy to have around, but yielded mostly restless nights.

single-malt scotch. Now, I could appreciate it.

a coin-op ride outside the supermarket underwhelming and vaguely sticky. But still, the world would be sadder without it.

Times Square better when it was worse.

a fireplace video. It crackled, and looked convincing, but provided no actual warmth.

a Rubik's Cube. I smashed it on the ground so I wouldn't waste any more time with it.

an old episode of *Seinfeld*. I can't imagine a late night where I wouldn't be happy to revisit it for 22 minutes.

a possible no-hitter. We were obliged not to mention the lack of scoring until it was over.

a banned insecticide. It worked amazingly well, but probably would have killed us.

the core of a star too hot not to cool down.

**RUN BACK**

***If only I'd thought to bottle the way your neck smelled after a jog along the river.***

**SWITCHEROO**

***I have replaced you with a body pillow.***

**SILVER FOX**

***Couldn't you just consolidate and work off your credit card debt instead of going to Belize with that old man?***

**WHY MATTERS**

*I think you came back because I asked you, not because you wanted to.*

**MY MISTRESS' EYES ARE NOTHING LIKE THE SUN**

*You are assless and have stick-out ribs, but you are tubby, too. You've read Proust in French but live in West Texas. You think a lot about clothes but wear pajamas most of the time. Your feet smell awful. All of this I loved.*

**WRAPPED**

*My love for you is like a mummy carefully preserved, with the brains yanked out.*

**UNPRECEDENTED**

*When we first got together and you asked how many women I'd slept with, I thought you were worried about STDs. Now I'm pretty sure it was my sexual technique that made you ask.*

**CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?**

*I've gone through three phones since we last spoke. How many more before I stop transferring your number?*

**SOHO SAD**

*I was there for those first paintings, and now I don't get to go to your openings.*

**MISSED SOME SPOTS**

***Wish I could've saved some of your freckles, somehow.***

**BEEN BAD**

*You turned and said, "Spank me. I give you permission." But I couldn't bring myself to hurt you. I sure would like to take you up on it now, though.*

**IN THE FOLD**

*I still make those paper cranes and dollar bill rings you showed me. For my daughters.*

**APPLE OF MINE**

*I was more than ready to give you a shot, but I could never be with someone who considers chucking an apple core an unforgivable act of littering.*

HOWâ€™S SPOT?

*When I see you, what I really want to ask about is your vagina. Itâ€™d be like asking about a beloved dog. â€œHowâ€™s the vagina? Whatâ€™s it up to? Any adorable mischief lately? Give it a pat for me!â€*

FAIR TRADE

*You broke my heart, but refined my grammar and sense of style.*

DAY OFF

*Could we take a one-day vacation from our lives and spend it wandering around an old amusement park at the edge of summer?*

DOWNTURN

***I shouldâ€™ve hoarded you for the lean times.***

EYE-TALIAN

***I resent it when people compliment the glasses you got for me in Milan, because itâ€™s like theyâ€™re praising you. But I do look great in them.***

HEMLINING

*I regret not being able to see you dressed in all the fashions that have come and gone since we split.*

LETâ€™S HEAR IT FOR HALFWAY

*Itâ€™s okay that we never made it to the top.*

MAY DAY

***Five-foot-nothing. Thirty-seven. Red hair past your ass. Five cats. White convertible with overdue payments. Unblended lipliner. Playboy tattoo. Day tripper. You had more red flags than Mother Russia.***

ROCKY ROAD

*I got fat after we broke up, but donâ€™t let that swell your head. It was more because I was working at the ice cream store.*

WILLIAMâ€™S PENN

***When I get a hard-on, it points towards Philadelphia. It thinks youâ€™re still there.***

FIFTEEN MINUTES OF LAME

*You left me for someone who doesnâ€™t know who Andy Warhol is.*

SQUASHED

***We would have stayed together longer if you werenâ€™t such a militant vegan. But I will always remember the summer when I ate only sides. By August I saw you as a talking pork chop.***

ITTIGI LITTIGUV YITTIGOU

*Thank you for teaching me how to say â€œI love youâ€ in gibberish.*

THE COUPLE THAT HATES TOGETHER

*We had contempt for all the same things and people, and I still canâ€™t believe that that wasnâ€™t enough.*

SHOELESS JILL

*In my book, being the Girl Who Walked Around Campus Barefoot means youâ€™ll always be a celebrity worthy of desire, even if youâ€™ve long since shod yourself.*

OPPOSITE DAYS

***For the record: I hate you = I love you. I said it a lot. I still do. Hate you.***

FINAL TALLY

*You are the only person I ever enjoyed kissing.*

AFTER FONDUE

*It was a miracle that we ended up in a private room at that hotel in Paris. I'm still sad I was too shy to crawl into your bed because you kept talking about your boyfriend back home. Boyfriend? We were 20! In Paris!*

**KAME-KAME-HA**

*I miss the ninja yells while you tickled me to tears.*

**TYPIST**

***I hate when people ask me what my "cetype" is. Because I always end up describing you.***

**BOYS MATURE SLOWER**

*I needed ten years to catch up with you.*

**EXTRA, EXTRA**

*My Times subscription is still in your name. Either you never look at your credit card statement, or you want to stay in my life by providing me with a hard copy of the news.*

**GRADE A**

***You are a gigantic ass. And not the good kind of gigantic ass, like my ass.***

**HEY LADYSMITH**

*I thought your "sissy" South African accent made up for the extra weight, but try telling that to my friends.*

**LATE FEE**

***I asked for my DVDs back, but what I really wanted was for you to return all the love I gave you.***

**CHICAGO HOPELESS**

*I accept the fact that I supported you through medical school. I don't think it's wrong of me to expect free health advice and prescriptions on demand for life.*

**STYLE POINTS**

***I keep trying to get my hair back to exactly the way it was when you loved me.***

**MARLBORO FIGHTS**

*I thought it was sweet the way you smoked a pack every time we had a big argument.*

**CYBER SUMMARY**

*Online: you were perfect. Then: disaster.*

**I'VE TRIED**

*All this would be so much easier if I hated you.*

**ALL ABOUT YU**

*I studied enough Italian to have conversations with your parents, but you only learned enough Cantonese to count to ten.*

**NO-NAME DROPPING**

***I still talk about you all the time. You're my brilliant, nameless "friend."***

**PABLO, HONEY**

*I practice Borges and Neruda aloud so I can read them to you in the mother tongue someday.*

**PSYCHIATRIC HELP 5¢**

***It's nice you went to therapy after we broke up. I wish you'd gone while we were still together.***

**THE NOTHINGTON POST**

*Found your secret blog. It's so boring!*

**NOTHING GOLDSCHLÄGER CAN STAY**

*I was drunker than I'd ever been. You tasted like cinnamon. Is your name really Paco? Because no one believes me.*

HERSUTE

*I hope you didn't go through those hair-removal procedures for me. I like my women mammals.*

KILLJOY

***How were you against holding hands? That's like hating springtime, or being anti-kitten.***

THE REAL DEAL

***I'm sorry I accused you of pretending to be gay.***

WINONA AND FRIENDS FOREVER

*I don't regret getting a tattoo of your name. I just watered it down by adding a bunch of other lovers.*

HAVAIANAS NIGHTS

*Your shoes were terrible; I wish we'd dated during flip-flop season.*

A MORE CIVILIZED AGE

*It both cheers and saddens me to think that glow-in-the-dark condoms plus lightsaber sound effects comprised the high point of our relationship.*

NEAR MISS

***I wish I missed you, so I could do that instead of just feeling empty.***

GO FIGARO

*Thanks to the tragedy of our breakup, I now love opera. But I can't find anyone who will go with me.*

NO VIBRATIONS

***It kills me that we were too young, shy, and oblivious to use toys.***

FUN SCALE

***Being with you was fun, but fantasizing about you is funner.***

OLD STYLE

*I started collecting vintage erotica because they have bodies and hair like yours.*

WELL, DUH

*I miss that stupid face you made during sex.*

I, SPECTATOR

***I may have exaggerated my devotion to sports to win you, but my love of sitting, eating, and watching things was genuine.***

MULLIGAN

*Can I have a do-over?*

CURSES

*You couldn't dress up like an elf and pretend I was a wizard that cast a sex spell on you? You are not a dreamer like me.*

TIMING MACHINE

***I wish we'd met when we were sixteen.***

FRESHEN UP

*Do me this favor. Next time you're in bed with a girl you're not serious about, and she says she'll be right back from the bathroom, don't whisper, "I miss you."*

THE REAL ENDING

***Dear Old Love,***

***I knew it was over when!***

• the back rubs tapered off to one every three years.

• you got back into the car with all that beef jerky.

• you used the recession as an excuse to stop going to the movies.

• you said the secret to a long marriage was freedom.



â€¢ you got the call about your father. Iâ€™m not good with bad times.  
â€¢ you started secretly making copies of my recipes.  
â€¢ you claimed to have outgrown dirty limericks.  
â€¢ you no longer looked me in the eyes on video chat.  
â€¢ you quit straining the pulp from my orange juice.  
â€¢ I saw his silver Audi in front of your place. Good-bye, and thanks for slumming.  
â€¢ you gave up cunnilingus for Lent.  
â€¢ your mom yelled at me for not knowing who Rebecca from the Bible was. With the way she was talking I thought this Rebecca was a neighbor of yours.  
â€¢ you had a second kid. Through marriage and kid #1, I figured I still had a shot.  
â€¢ you stopped being real and started being polite.  
â€¢ I started living vicariously through your infidelities.  
â€¢ you didnâ€™t pay for my dinner. For the two-hundred-and-fiftieth time.  
â€¢ you stopped hoisting me up onto your shoulders at outdoor concerts. And, we stopped going to concerts.  
â€¢ you quit wanting to coordinate our Halloween costumes.  
â€¢ you wept and said you no longer loved me.

SLEAZE LIKE US

***Crawl back into the hole you came out of. And take me with you.***

BOOK HIM

*I finally finished my novel. Itâ€™s nothing like the early drafts you read. The character based on you kills himself because heâ€™s a jackass and everybody hates him. Especially me.*

LOW FIDELITY

*I put on the mixes you made for me just to hear everyone complain about how terrible they are.*

DARN IT

*You like the club scene. I like to knit. You said that wouldnâ€™t matter. It did.*

INDECENT PROPOSAL

***I didnâ€™t want to say yes. Itâ€™s just that itâ€™s very hard to say no when someone whips out a ring on top of Table Mountain and his family is at the bottom waiting to celebrate the œgood news.œ***

AN AMERICAN CLASSIC

*I liked your roommate better.*

PRETTY COLD, HUH?

*I had so much small talk prepared for when I saw you, but when you appeared, I couldnâ€™t say anything.*

WILD WEST

*When I think about you living alone in that cabin, I ache to bring you coffee, a horse, and a fiddle.*

CAST IRONY

***I left because you threw the frying pan at my head, and now the thing I miss most is your cheesy eggs.***

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

*Inverted nipple canyons and wild, bumpy areolae, like relief maps of Antarctica and Madagascar. I felt like Vasco da Gama. I hope theyâ€™re appreciated now.*

INKING ABOUT YOUR BODY

*I heard you got an ass tattoo, as if there were any other kind.*

SUSPENDED

*I feel like we issued each other irrevocable make-out licenses, good anytime, anywhere. Itâ€™s always a sad shock to realize this isnâ€™t the case.*

BED RINGERS

**Being an identical twin does not mean I'm interchangeable with my sister.**

ILL SEND AN SMS TO THE WORLD

**I upgraded to unlimited texts for you. Now what?**

WITHERING

*After you left, all the plants were so distraught they committed suicide.*

KEEP IT LIKE A SECRET

*I think of you whenever I hear our song playing in a store. I especially think of how you hated all of my music, and how I never even told you it was our song.*

SLEEP TIGHT

*You deserved a higher thread count than I could give you.*

OR FOREVER HOLD MY PEACE

**I'm being passionately curious, not snide, when I ask: Did you fix all that stuff before you got married? How?**

WOOD PANELING

*I prefer bars designed to resemble old basement rec rooms, because they remind me of you and being young and going wild.*

BACK BURNER

**I'm still your plan B, right?**

STUNG

*I can't believe you're becoming the type of guy who stays cute. Couldn't you have followed Robert Redford instead of Paul Newman? more Sundance, less kid?*

ENLIGHTEN UP

*I know you love the Power of Now, but living in the moment does not mean pretending our relationship never happened.*

PERSPECTIVE

*No, it's not the end of the world. But it's the end of a lot.*

THE JOSHUA

*I finally opened up that restaurant, and I named a sandwich after you, like you'd always wanted. Greasy hair, bug eyes, bad social skills, and a small penis on rye.*

FLAVOR ENHANCER

**You appear in all my dreams. You make the dirty ones dirtier, and the weird ones so much weirder.**

PICK YOU UP AT ROUTE 7?

*Just because we broke up doesn't mean we can't drive from New Jersey to Las Vegas and get impulse-married.*

RUBBERNECKED

**Every time I drove you home, I prayed for traffic.**

MINI GOLF

*I miss things we never even got to do together.*

SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH

*That time we made out while sitting on the Abe Lincoln statue? There should be a statue of that.*

GOLDEN YEARS

**I really did want to be a grandparent with you. It's just that getting to that point would have been an interminable slog.**

THE LINES ARE OPEN

*I hereby rescind the prohibition against calling me during Steelers games.*

MEAL PLAN

***I miss pretending to ignore you in the cafeteria.***

PUZZLING

*How the hell did our bodies fit together like that, yet we're not together?*

NARROWING

***I've ruled out academics, the very religious, Europeans, post-hippies, and now, thanks to you, old friends.***

ON PHOTOGRAPHY

*Why, in picture after picture, do we look happier than I ever remember us being?*

YOU-SHAPED SEATING CHART

***Your underwear is the only thing I remember from eighth-grade Spanish.***

SUFFICIENCY

*I maraschino'd my own cherries, jerked my own beef—what other signs of self-reliance could you want?*

WITLESS PROTECTION PROGRAM

*You were adorable and rich, but you didn't make me laugh.*

NUDE FOR NOTHING

***Your tepid response to my naked pictures means we are never speaking again.***

BEYOND BETTY AND VERONICA

*You're the model for all the hot-girl characters in my comics.*

WHAT'S MINE IS YOURS

*I thought it was great that we had so much in common. Now I have nothing in my life to enjoy that doesn't remind me of you.*

A PRICE ABOVE FAKE RUBIES

*Don't forget: A glimpse of your boobs is worth a lot more than a string of Mardi Gras beads.*

THE OLD STORY

***Boy meets girl. They fall madly in love. It peters out for one of them. You, in this instance.***

CLASS OF '76

*I wonder how things would have turned out had I gone to the gas station with you after the reunion.*

THROWING CATCH PHRASES

***If you wanted to do some damage, saying I didn't have enough "owwow factor" in bed did the trick.***

WAYNE'S MANNERISMS

*I'm over you like Batman is over losing his parents.*

PRAYER WHEEL

*I begged God to let me have you. Then I begged God to free me from you.*

SAME-SAME

*Dostoevsky said of Russian writers, "We all came out of Gogol's overcoat." And all my ideas about love came out of your jeans.*

BUY-BYE

***So I fell in love with our broker. Sue me. Oh wait—you did.***

GONE GREEN

***I'll always be jealous of whoever is with you. And I'm talking all the way to the one pushing you in a wheelchair down the dewy lawn of your old folks' home.***

DRESSED TO KILL

*Tank tops, on your figure, were truly an implement of war.*

POLYGLUT

*You spoke six languages. Love wasn't one of them.*

CEYLON, FAREWELL

*Sugar: there was never enough in the tea you made.*

DOOR NUMBER YOU

***I try not to open it often, but when I do, that raw, sweet love for you just waves and shrugs: "Still here."***

CARVED OUT

*Your wedding announcement is hidden in my scrapbook, behind a Mount Rushmore postcard.*

GREEN MONSTER

*I miss the jealous rage you used to stoke in me. It was like rocket fuel.*

WE HAD TO BE NUTS

*Only with you did I go on those soaring, crazy carnival rides—the ones where crowds gather to stare and shake their heads, muttering, "They gotta be nuts."*

HOSED

***Though I'm a fireman, I can't put you out.***

NEVER STOP PEDALING

***My memories of our bike rides are beyond fond. It was when we were on foot that things got rough.***

LOCKED OUT

*Weird, but in all my mental pictures of you, you're rummaging for your keys.*

WONDER WALLS

*The book-lined "thinking shed" I built behind the house? It's for thinking about you.*

INDOOR VOICES

*Of course I appreciate you trying to teach me how to argue properly. I was just a bad student.*

OUTFITTED

*You told me if I dressed better, I'd have better friends. Infuriatingly, you were right.*

HI, HONEY

***Coming home to you never got old. Every day was like a miracle.***

IN A BIND

***Was I reading too much into those long, tight hugs you used to give me?***

PRIORITIES

*I always thought our spirited breakfast conversations and rollicking walks around the block more than made up for the rote sex.*

THREE WINKS MEANS

*I'm sad all the codes we formed are now part of a dead language.*

BENDER

***I'm too old for the Land of Lust by now, but if I could go back and visit for a weekend, I'd take you with me.***

ASTRONOMY

*My world revolves around you, but I haven't seen you in years. I feel like Pluto, the quasi planet, looking for the sun from a trillion miles away.*

LOVE BRIGADE

*No fewer than forty sixth-grade boys were in love with you. I am proud of my service in that army.*

ST. COUCHINGTON'S WEEKEND

*Maybe inventing our own holidays so early in the affair meant we were moving too fast.*

ACHE

*I mourn the fact that never again will I lift and press you against a wall and kiss you. And even if you let me, my old back wouldn't.*

AMOR EMERITUS

***Nothing you can do would stop me from loving you. My heart has given you tenure.***

PENWOMANSHIP

*I love how your handwriting stayed loopy and girlish.*

BALLING THINGS UP

*Did you find the surprise I left in your sock drawer?*

SANDWISH

*We were peanut butter and jelly. You were the jelly, all slick and unreliable. I was the peanut butter, stuck on you.*

STILL A SOLID EDUCATION

*Hey, Reach. I ended up marrying my safety school.*

HOLDING ON

***Dear Old Love,***

***I still have your!***

â€¢ Princeton sweatshirt. Luckily, it was what I wanted in the first place.

â€¢ virginity, but I've taken amazing care of it.

â€¢ scent lodged in my nostrils.

â€¢ opposition to the word "enthused."

â€¢ tradition of leaving white Christmas lights up all year.

â€¢ prejudice against raisins.

â€¢ third-grade report card, somehow.

â€¢ gourd-orange wall-paint. It would take too many coats to cover it up.

â€¢ loathing for words missing their final "eg."

â€¢ passport. But congratulations on the destination wedding.

â€¢ laundry techniques. You domesticated me. In a good way.

â€¢ ability to get depressed about not being invited to parties that you would never go to anyway.

â€¢ fearlessness about sending back dishes at restaurants.

â€¢ errand-based lifestyle.

â€¢ folder for our wedding on my desktop.

â€¢ baseball autographed by Dwight Gooden. Wanna have a catch?

â€¢ pendant. I wear the hideous thing from time to time.

â€¢ fondness for, and lascivious pronunciation of, the word "natch."

â€¢ Tarot cards. I flip them.

â€¢ yoga mat. Some quiet nights I sit on it cross-legged and pretend it's a magic carpet.

â€¢ rainbow wristbands. They'll come back, even if you never do.

â€¢ sheet music "all the heavy metal classics, arranged for piano.

â€¢ custom-molded mouth guard. You'd rather grind your teeth anyway.

SMOKED OUT

*Someone else spent a whole night smoking into my hair. I didn't wash it for three days, wishing I could hate that about you again.*

HOT WATER

***I never got as clean, or as dirty, as I did in the shower with you.***

ROLE MODELING

I LOVE YOU ALL

***I say "I love you" to people all the time now, to make that time I said it to you mean less.***

SHY SIDE

*In almost every other aspect of your life you were brutal and commanding, yet you were so vulnerable and sweet when you looked up at me for approval during you-know-what.*

ME+U

*Why couldn't it have been my initials you carved into that detention-room desk?*

STRIDE RITE

***You strode with great purpose, but you never had any.***

LOW ANGLE

*I can still remember how far I have to tilt my head back, and the degree at which I need to fix my gaze to look up at you when we're standing close to each other.*

25% OFF

*I didn't love you just for your employee discount, but it was definitely part of the equation.*

CHEERING SECTION

***You have no idea how hard I root for you.***

ORIGINS

*I'm embarrassed that my mind works this way, but whenever I see you with your kids, I can't help but think of how much dang fun it must've been getting you pregnant.*

TOO LEGIT TO QUIT

***I know you worried your bootyliciousness was on the wane, but to me it's as enduring a force as gravity.***

MY ISLAND

*Being with you was like being on vacation from the world.*

YES, THERE. THERE! LET'S CAMP THERE! YES.

***The orgasms were real, but my giddy excitement over all the rugged outdoor activity was fake.***

LAST WALTZ

*Don't think I quit violin for you. I quit violin for me.*

FAR EAST

***I still think you only saw me as an ethnic studies credit.***

WALK ON THE MILD SIDE

*I'll never forget you saying you were ready for a "summer of self-destruction" before spending two months holding my hand in city parks.*

ETERNAL RECURRENCE

*The idea of living life over makes me tired and sad, with the exception of doing us again.*

ACTION FIGURED

***You were the closest thing to a G.I. Joe doll I ever dated—a brave Marine who was totally fake.***

MORE CHEESE!

*Eating less dairy was your solution for everything. I had the opposite philosophy.*

OUCH

***I pretended it hurt more than it did so you could feel like a tough guy.***

THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED

*I know you wrote better songs when we fought. But aren't there enough songs already?*

D-BAG

*I am very sorry I asked you to douche. I'm sure you smelled fantastic. I was young and didn't know anything.*

SEE YOU IN SHUL

***So you and I are no more, but the Judaism stuck?***

THE PRINGLES OF WISHFUL THINKING

*I continue to shop for all your disgusting favorites: instant oatmeal, frozen chicken wings, bacon ranch chips. Just in case.*

WASH THAT UPDATE RIGHT OUT OF MY HAIR

*The day you changed your Facebook status to "Engaged," I spent 40 minutes in the shower so my boyfriend wouldn't hear me crying.*

WE-CUP

*I can't bring myself to throw out that ratty old bra of mine you liked so much.*

SCREW THAT

***I realize I can't fix you. I'll leave that to your husband, since he's the biggest tool I know.***

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

*Your not calling me back was like a network exec who cancels a perfect show too soon.*

YON SOLITARY HIGHLAND LASS

*I still know all the poems I memorized to impress you.*

WINTER

*One thing I always remember is how we'd clutch each other and laugh when the radiator clanged.*

WORKING IT

***I still do extra push-ups in your name.***

THE OLD CURRENCY

*Sexual inflation has radically devalued "Want to Hold Your Hand." But really, I just want to hold your hand.*

YOU ENCRYPT ME

*You'd shake your head when I couldn't remember passwords. I've changed them all to something I can't forget your name.*

ALL GROWN DOWN

***Maturity was our great undoing.***

SO LONG, LONG ISLAND

*We always have that weekend on Montauk—the boundless sea, the boundless fights about your mother.*

HA

***I realize now that my patented "tickle torture" was, in fact, torture.***

LIKE A MIGHTY OAK

*Yours is the only penis I've encountered that I describe as having integrity.*

CURSE MY HAZEL EYES

*I'm glad you finally found the conservative, blue-eyed, Dutch, Christian Reformed girl of your mother's dreams.*

THE ORIGINAL O.D.

*I'm going to have to miss your annual overdose this year, as I'll be up North.*

INCUBI, SUCCUBI, BYE-BYE

*I dream about you so often I fully expect you to show up for my morphine-addled deathbed hallucinations.*

PROTOTYPE

*How could you stand me? I'm glad you did, but I was such a jerk and poor dresser back then.*

BLOWN

*You thought I blew it. I thought you blew it. The truth is, the people we eventually married blew it.*

DIGITAL FIX

*I want to get together and talk about all the new technologies that have come out since we parted.*

NON-TRANSFERABLE

*I still owe you a trip to Venice. I'm guessing you won't collect, though I wish you would.*

BUSTED

*Sometimes I imagine us making out, then stop because I picture your dad catching us. He'd be so pleased that he still has the power to break us apart.*

MY SWEET

*I bake now! Me! Who couldn't toast bread! Give me your address and I'll send you cookies, cupcakes, brownies!*

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

***I deserve better, but I don't want better.***

NOW I KNOW MY ABCS

*Thank you for saving the tag from my new bra, after I figured out I was a D-cup instead of a C. You kept it in your wallet, like a much-bragged- about picture of the grandkids. It doesn't make up for the fact that you left me for a girl with As, but still, it was sweet.*

BETWEEN EVERYTHING

*No one else will sunbathe on the highway median with me.*

CARVED IN

*Yours is, by far, the deepest and most profound notch on my bedpost.*

DO YOU THINK YOU'RE WHAT THEY SAY YOU ARE?

*You were the only one who could truly appreciate Jesus Christ Superstar with me.*

BETTER MAKE IT FIVE

***Just give me three more chances.***

MISSING THE GRADE

*I checked with the registrar at Harvard they have no record of anyone with your name ever having enrolled.*

YOUR PEE-JAR CAME BETWEEN US

*I adored you, but could never have had sex in such a filthy apartment.*

TOBOGGAN

***Snowfalls, to me, are your body under mine, on a sled, flying.***

MFA

*For someone with a degree in creative writing, you sure write unoriginal breakup letters.*

COMBO

*We'll always have the afternoons by your locker.*

FIRST CHAIR

*I always liked musicians. I just never imagined my favorite would be an aspiring high school band director.*

HOUSEKEEPING

***I fear we're in for a karmic doozy when I think about what we put hotel maids through.***



*Grocery shopping without you is like going to Chuck E. Cheese with no kids.*

**YOUTHâ€™S A STUFF WILL NOT ENDURE**

*You had me at my ripest. Iâ€™m glad somebody did.*

**SAGINAW**

*I regret that in all our years we never got to survive a real Michigan winter together. Coats, snow, body heat, and holding mitten hands all seem to be part of some crucial equation, and we missed it.*

**PAVLOVâ€™S ASTHMA**

***Thanks to you, inhalers turn me on.***

**IRON, MAN**

***I donâ€™t break easily, so you must be really strong.***

**ALL SET?**

*We really canâ€™t just play tennis together? My husbandâ€™s God bless every other aspect of himâ€™s worthless on the court.*

**LOVE ACTUALLY, ACTUALLY**

*I enjoyed your chick flicks a lot more than I let on.*

**HONEST A**

***Your academic integrity prevented our affair, but I still get turned on when I read about deregulation.***

**SAINT ME**

*I want to save the world, just so you canâ€™t be the one to do it.*

**I STILL CARE**

*You looked better naked than dressed. While there is something secret-weaponish about that, most people will judge you clothed, so please let me give you a makeover.*

**COMFORTABLY NUMB**

*How did you sleep all those nights with my arm tucked under you? How did I? I miss those tingling morning hours, the circulation creeping back through my veins.*

**DROP ME OFF**

***Your messy car felt like home.***

**CUSTODY**

*You still have my green jacket. You still have much more than my green jacket.*

**BUT, ALAS!**

***Dear Old Love, I only regret!***

â€¢ that we turned back before we got to the Grand Canyon.

â€¢ haranguing you about wearing jeans too often and dresses not often enough. (Stillâ€™wear more dresses!)

â€¢ my refusal to accept your leaving with dignity and grace, even if pouting and rage have their own grace.

â€¢ comparing you to all those main characters in Billy Joel songs.

â€¢ balking on our trip to India.

â€¢ having an affair when I didnâ€™t even like the other one all that much.

â€¢ that I made you turn off the lights that last time.

â€¢ portioning out sex like you were a dog in need of treats, even if you were a dog in need of treats.

â€¢ not mercy-killing our marriage sooner.

â€¢ saying â€œDonâ€™t flatter yourself!â€ so many times during our breakup.

â€¢ not seeing the look on the next suckerâ€™s face when he finds out.

â€¢ asking you how you got your burn.

â€¢ being too timid to do Ecstasy with you. Now I knowâ€™youâ€™re never too old.

â€¢ not enjoying your tantrums while I had the chance.

â€¢ we were not sixty years older when we met. Our age difference would seem negligible, plus you would not be able to get away so easily.

â€¢ turning you on to yoga, and yoga instructors.

â€¢ my last five drunken e-mails.

â€¢ not ceding control of the remote more often.

â€¢ being able to dish it out but not take it.

â€¢ not recognizing how ahead of your time you were.

â€¢ never letting you see me cry.

HEALING

*I'm still a little disappointed in me, and nature itself, for getting over the loss of you.*

MADE INFORMED

***I'm a better man thanks to your bra-unhooking tutorials.***

MAKE IT NEW

*Old-fashioned love was never our style.*

LET'S RUMBLE

***I know it got old for you, but I could have gone back and forth hurting each other forever.***

HIDDEN ASSETS

*I loved that you always fell for tall, ambitious, confident women. Unfortunately, I am none of those things.*

GENIE

***I keep thinking if I rub this bottle of Maker's Mark vigorously enough, you'll appear.***

FORE!

***I wasn't amused when you pretended to emboss your testicles with the golf ball personalizer I gave you. Fine, I was amused a little.***

BUGGIN'

*I put in your initials when I get a high score on Centipede.*

BEAMED

*Remember at the beach when the moon would always follow us?*

HEADING BACK

*Wonder where your ponytail is swinging now.*

YOU AWAKE?

***I hope you at least appreciate all the pebbles I flicked at your window.***

PARENTS, DINNER, MOVIES, KISS

***I like to think ours was the last proper date in America.***

WAG

***It was puppy love in that we both loved your puppy more than each other.***

PEARLY GATE

*If there is, as I've been led to believe, an escalator to heaven, I pray I be ascending it behind you, with your bum right in front of me.*

MILK OF AMNESIA

*I couldn't make you young again, or make you forget yourself. My breasts were not, as you and your wizened peers seemed to think, a fountain of youth.*

PAIN AS RELIGION

*You believed Jesus walked on water, but you wouldn't believe my fibromyalgia was real.*

OUT OF ORDER

***I should never have described you as "good-looking for a law student."***

FOILED

*You looked amazing even in your full fencing gear.*

SEVEN SISTERLY

*Part of me is still waiting for you in the dorm parlor—hair up, clutch in my lap, Lydia practicing the piano in the back.*

I NEEDED MY SPACE

*I only stayed over every night because of the free parking spot.*

PARENT TRAP

***My folks liked you a lot better than I did. They have good taste, but it isn't mine.***

ABRACADABRA

*How is it you never went down on me in all that time we were together? I see it as a kind of post-modern magic act, like David Blaine suspending himself in a box over the Thames.*

TRÄ'S OBVIOUS

***I only called you pretentious because I wished I was more like you.***

INTO THIN AIR

*Our ideal vacations couldn't get along, so neither could we. I had my Nepal; you had your Cancun.*

THE MIRACLE OF EVERYTHING

*You know how when you're young and you first smoke pot, you can't wait to try everything in that enhanced, giddy state? Movies! Hiking! Shopping! I was like that when I got high on you.*

DEFACED

***That was my head that got cut out of your online dating picture.***

SAME BUT DIFFERENT

*I melted down my wedding band and had the metal remolded to make a nearly identical ring.*

INESCAPE ARTIST

*Even when I dream of you, you break up with me. Even when it goes well and we end up making out, you stop, push me away, and say, "No. This isn't what I want."*

THE HOTLINE IS COLD

***The worst part is, I can't talk to you about what to do about you.***

ROCK & ROLLED

*I'll be waiting for you after your mild fame evaporates.*

I DO WANT WHAT I HAVEN'T GOT

*Nothing compares to sharing a single pair of headphones with U.*

REDRESSING

***I want to compensate all those people you've undertipped through the years.***

SET, SPIKE

*Why couldn't you have taken me as seriously as you took your recreational volleyball league?*

A HUNK OF THE PAST

***If only it were socially acceptable to have a picture of you in a bathing suit on my desk.***

KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

*I miss saying, "You know what I mean?" and having you know what I mean.*

NEW CELL PLAN

*They say every seven years, all our cells are new. There's some contentment knowing that the me who fell in love with you no longer exists.*

*Iâ€™d know a lot more about the Roman aqueducts if your seat, and the perfumed back of your head, hadnâ€™t been right in front of me.*

## FIRST PERSON SINGULAR

***â€œWe all miss youâ€ was a cruel thing to say to me, and you knew it.***

## APPETIZED

*Iâ€™m still trying to re-create your famous twelve-layer nacho dip.*

## SHREWâ€™D

*I shouldnâ€™t have said those things about your mother. Still, Iâ€™d say them again.*

## ICING

***You may be the last human who still uses the phrase â€œtotsil hockey.â€ And yes, dear, you were its Wayne Gretzky.***

## LONG HOURS, FEW PERKS

*I just wasnâ€™t up for being your assistant micromanager.*

## MOHAWKED

***Declaring things to be punk rock or not punk rock is definitely not punk rock.***

## NO DARK SARCASM IN THE KITCHEN

*I would gladly let you home-school my kids (as long as you didnâ€™t teach them any of the dirty stuff about me).*

## OUT OF DATE

*I still have your mix tape. But I donâ€™t have anything to play it on.*

## PURPOSE-DRIVEN LOVE

***Thereâ€™s no such thing as a â€œpointlessâ€ affair.***

## ADD IT UP

*Songs about moving out. Songs about standing in the rain. The Violent Femmesâ€™ first album, and Tom Waits. I only understood music halfway before you left.*

## LOCK

***Please donâ€™t cut your hair. I feel like I own emotional stock in it, and so should have a vote.***

## WOOLLY BULLY

***Your hand-knit snowflake sweaters were an implicit promise of hearty masculinity. And you reneged.***

## ANIME MINE

*I could have been everything to you. Except a pigtailed Japanese schoolgirl.*

## MY UNLUCKY STARS

***You got so famous I had to cancel cable.***

## GOD VS. GOD

*Our religious difference wasnâ€™t the problem, but itâ€™s nice to think that it was.*

## SHAKEN

*I couldnâ€™t just let you be my favorite bartender, could I?*

## HOME FRIED

***You converted me to brunch, and now Iâ€™m eating it by myself.***

## WHEN HARRY MET TACKY

*I like how we had one of those giant wagon wheels for a table in our apartment.*

## NOT BUSY ENOUGH