

UNREAD LETTERS

a prosaic poem by Stefanie Grutsch

words
they come so beautifully
but carry nothing
of my plaintive cry

how could you
understand
my so strange tone?
the pain
i carry as my love?

in thousand different ways
and not like this
i want to
swear

but which power
should i break?
not even words
obey my will

my blood, my soul
and innards
my brain, my heart
i lay down to your feet

but you
don't even want to take
these unassuming
poor and poorest
letters

It's been two weeks now, that he's got that letter. He didn't know who they guy was, the letter was addressed to; most likely somebody who had lived in the house before him. Wasn't there this music-bloke who now was kind of famous or something? Randy Something... A stupid name. But the letter said *Sam T*. He felt like opening it. From Germany. A woman. A beautiful but aggressive writing. He's never liked the Germans. *Dear Sam* Oh, the letter was perfumed. Ts, Europeans! Wait a moment! He knew this perfume... wasn't that, hum, no, he didn't know. But he liked it, yeah, it was good... *Dear Sam, whenever I send you a letter these days and you are surprised, just always imagine a "In spite of all" as first phrase.* What does she mean! In spite of what! Hell, couldn't she

express herself more clearly? *I assume that one of these days you'll go on the road* Ha, so it **was** the music-clown. Of course! They always like the musicians. Stupid bitches. *you'll go on the road and perhaps one night, when you're drunk, can't sleep, think about things, you'll be in the mood to talk to me and explain me why.* Damn, what was that again! Explain what?! What kind of letter is that, where you understand shit! *Then again I think I don't even wanna know. One sentence has burned itself into my brain: Hope is just a lack of information. And what will I have, when my hope is gone? Then again I listen to Ella's song "Everyone's wrong but me..." and in spite of all I trust you. Although you're absent you make me happier than anybody who stayed with me ever could. In each man before you I only loved you; with every feeling I felt I was only practicing my love for you. For what finds room in one soul the world is too small, too clear, too real.* Oh, she's a little philosopher. *It's been one month now, that you talked to me the last time. Of course I know you've left me, but as long as you don't **tell** me, I won't believe it. Nobody can put down somebody's feelings by ration; least I can do it myself. Forever, yours Stef.* Hm, Stef. Seems as if you really were in love. If he only had seen this guy once. Surely he wasn't worth it a bit! But what should he answer now? ... Answer? ... Sometimes I'm a real idiot. Why should he answer a stranger's letter?! But somebody should answer it; this girl seemed to suffer. Why does he even think about it! It was absolutely none of his business and it was not his problem, when some girl who just happens along is love-sick. Should this idiot Sam or Randy or whatever solve his problems alone. He seemed to be an asshole anyway. Yeah. Why did she even love him?! Why did **he** never get letters like that anyway?! Stef. How she might look like? She sounds beautiful... What's this bullshit again? She **sounds beautiful**. Bullshit. But she really smelled good. He knew **that** much. He would go to bed now.

No letters today. Once again. Not even the stranger's writing to her super-musician. Or did she find out his new address? Or did she stop writing? After all he had left her, hadn't he? But he had really more important things to do than think of other people's girls. His own girlfriend for example. He'd asked her if in every man before him she'd only loved him and she had been laughing at him hysterically and had asked him if he was stoned or had gone completely crazy now. 'Curtis', she'd said, 'I love you, but I loved others before, just like you, you know that! I mean you don't believe in the **real love** ore something like that, do you?' and he has been like 'No. Let's go and have a drink...'. But why should he not believe in the real love?! This German girl seemed to. And Germans weren't the most passionate people in the world... Hm but it seemed as if Brea was even less passionate; however, **he** would never ask her if she'd want to marry him! Ha! Should she ask him. But why would she, when she doesn't believe in the big love. I bet Stef would ask the asshole. Perhaps she already has asked him?! And he panicked... Nope, she wouldn't do that. She's too proud, ... uhhmm at least that was what he thought.

All right, o. k., what was he doing here? He's never been to this fucking museum before. Now where was this stupid "paper-cutting-machine"? Downstairs she had written. He had the letter in his trouser's pocket but he knew it by heart *Dear Sam. Yesterday a friend of mine lent me a 'Hawaii T-shirt' and I had to think about your grandfathers Hawaii-Shirt in which he asked your grandma to marry him. I've never told you but when I went to the Art Museum last time I've been to Memphis I wrote on one of the cards for the 'paper-cutting-machine' downstairs "Please marry me Sam". And then I put it in the machine and I almost started to cry. I didn't know why, it was supposed to be funny, but now I know. I'm still thinking about these pieces of paper sometimes, wondering if they still were lying in the big heap or if they already landed in the museum's garbage skip. I hope they're still there, standing in for me. Stef.* That was the most romantic thing he'd ever heard about. Probably that was quite poor, but Ahhh! the supervisor has left. Finally. But even if he'd find the pieces, could he take them with him? She wanted them to be there and remind the asshole of her existence. (Surely she'd be mad at him if she knew that he was calling him asshole, but pitifully she'd never find out.) To search the heap for the pieces was completely crazy anyway. What would he tell Brea, when she'd ask him what he has done today?! Shit! Now this idiot was coming back! Now he could only take a piece of paper, write "Yes" on it and put it into the machine. He took another one, wrote "Yes!!!!" and left. He hasn't been in such a good mood for months! He felt like he had done something special. On the way home he saw a huge butterfly sitting in the sun and he took a picture of it. Like an idiot.

First he'd wanted to write something with it but no, he'd only send her the picture. Without his address or name of course! Then she'd know that the asshole wasn't living here anymore and she wouldn't write him anymore! But the butterfly would make her smile, surely she liked surprises and mysterious stuff. He kissed the letter before putting it into the box. What might she look like when she's smiling? If he only had a picture of her!

Yes! The butterfly really has been a great idea. It was hardly three weeks that he'd sent it and now she was writing again. He wouldn't even go into the house with it; he would lie himself under the cedar in the garden! He felt like breathing the whole world. *Dear Sam, I don't know if you've sent me the butterfly, I don't think so, but I want to believe it. No matter if you did or not* What!?! No matter!?! It was **his** idea and he had known that she'd love it and for sure the asshole never ever would have done something like that! Didn't she see that?! *if you did or not, it shows how few would have been enough to let me stay happy; even for years, if necessary, I would have waited happily for my happiness. I didn't ask for anything, no promises, and I never would have asked after anything what would*

have been past then. But you've been too weak or too cowardly or just too idle once more. For something I gave to you so easily, so unquestioning. Now you might think you don't need it, somebody else would come and give it to you; or perhaps you don't even think about it, 'cause there are more important things and it's too complicated. But you didn't even see what could have happen to you. You only experienced an old and replaceable story where you had the chance for something unique. One day you will know that, but who will forgive you then? You will have to know that then and I'll be there 'cause you're already forgiven. I will have paid. With my dead and needless body, with every laugh I won't have laughed, and every joy, every fear, every thankfulness I won't have felt. With my anger and despair and this eternal speechless hopelessness which will have eaten me to death under my normal life I will have lived. Still I would act just like I did always again, although I would know how to reach what I want. But that way is not true and that's why I would give myself to you at any time again. Goddamned! Once, twice, three times has he read the thing. How could anyone love like that and write like that. How could anyone be so honest and open himself like that. What a woman she must be! But on the other side – how can anyone **not** love like that. Properly or not at all. Why didn't he believe in it?! Because he hasn't met ,the one'?! But now, he believed her. But who was she? Who sent him these letters? Him! They were addressed to somebody else, that's true, but they reached **him**; and they meant something to **him**. To the asshole they meant nothing; well, they wouldn't, if he'd get them. He believed in her. She was there for him, and she wrote these letters to him! This was not a fucking coincidence! But what now? Should he write her? She would never accept anybody else's love. Should he fly to Germany?! OH yes, he felt like taking the car, driving to the airport and flying to her. He felt like knocking at her door and staying with her for the rest of his life! But he didn't do it. He didn't even write her. But he left Brea and he felt nothing; but the longing for this stranger.

Oh yes, he really was up in the shit. He was 29, had left the woman he'd planned to share his life with, loved another woman he never had even seen nor spoken to, fucked up his job cause he only thought of the next letter he was now waiting for since months. But hey, this felt better than anything he knew! And he knew she'd write again. She loved him and she couldn't stop writing! And today he had that special feeling anyhow. Two more steps to the door, aaand? shit, shit, **postcard!!!!** Ha! Bingo. He'd known it! He'd felt it! But, who was fucking Sam T.? This postcard was addressed to him! But wait a minute, that was a picture, not a postcard. A picture of his own house! And it seemed as she had nothing written on it but a poem. Shit. He didn't like poems. *I'd like to be nothing // But the cedar in front of your house // But a branch of this cedar // But a leaf of its branch // But a shadow of this leaf // But the freshness of its shadow // Which caresses your temple // For a second -----*

----- For a second. For a second. As often as he repeated it she was there. For a second. Ahhh he embraced the cedar and didn't give a shit to the neighbours. He took one of the leafs and kissed it. Held it. His house had never looked so beautiful – like through her eyes. But wait! Wait! **She** had taken that picture! She was here! Of course, she already had written bout being to Memphis. But she had been **here**, in his house. She'd lived here. He ran in. He still had the furniture the asshole had left! Table, kitchen, couch, he didn't know what to touch first. **Bed!** She had slept in his bed! He slept in the same bed like her! He jumped on it and laughed and kissed the pillow and didn't give a shit about his sanity. When he woke up he remembered something; but what was it? He had met her before, that was how it felt. But it was impossible! He knew there was something. The asshole had left his stuff. The furniture ----- and ----- and a box! That was it! He'd put it under the bed at that time and never looked at it again. He almost fell out of the bed and tore the box out. There it was! There it really was.

Weird that he hadn't taken that stuff with him. There was nothing worthy or so but it was all stuff you normally don't leave anywhere. CDs, a coffee machine, uhhm that was strange, perfume ----- mmmmmh it was **her** perfume. This box was better than a treasure! But it really wasn't like the asshole that he'd packed all her stuff in a box... Most likely he just didn't know where to put it when he moved out and that's why he left it in this box. Ha, the better for him! Now he had a full flacon of her perfume; was it perverted to spray it in the bed? Probably yes, but he still would do it. Was that all? No! There was a postcard. Uhhm blue mountains and it said nothing but „Tirol“. Bullshit. What was that even supposed to mean? He really couldn't figure out what that should have to do with her. Why hadn't the asshole left a few pictures? Goddamned. Surely she was too beautiful to leave the pictures. Or, more likely in fact, he had thrown them away. Peasant. But there was something else... God, it was a letter! Only one? Yes, only one. But why? He must have received dozens. He had no right to throw them away! Ohhh, if he'd only catch him one day! He'd beat the shit out of his body! But this is senseless... at least he's left one letter *Dear Sam. Today I've been to the open-air cinema. I saw "Le fabouleux destin d'Amelie Poulain" for the second time. It made me think of you. Actually I'm always thinking of you, but it made me think about "us". Not only because we talked about the movie but also because of the conversation we had after our last dinner. Where might that have been?! Here, in his house? Or in a restaurant? Or in Germany perhaps? No. For sure he never went to Germany! Why should **he** spent money and time if she could do it! Ha, he knew that type of man. Ugh. *You said you don't have the luxury to be able to separate your head and heart. Well, I don't think that I have this luxury, because I believe that nothing that seems right for ones emotions can be irrational. You also said that our relationship wouldn't have the chance to develop in a normal way. You're right. And you know what? I don't even want it to develop normally. I want it to be what it is.**

God, that made him so angry! She was so brave and he was such a coward! Didn't she see that that were only feeble excuses!!? Dirty motherfucker. *I want it to be what it is. Something special. !!!! Something we have to be strong for. Something I have to learn how to be patient for. Something valuable. Something I can make sacrifices for and won't consider them as such. I know I am a dreamer. Yes, he knew how that felt! a dreamer. I want to be one! You told me you had loved Cindy but you wouldn't love me. Could it have happened that the asshole was honest once?! Respect! You seemed to just compare me with the other girls you had something like a "long-distance relationship" with Oh, that must be some kind of sport or something. and you said you wouldn't want me to "wait" for you. Wasn't he a knight! This guy really knew how to treat women! All of that was quiet hard to take. That's why I didn't reply when we really talked. I just didn't want to do it in the affect. Actually you should know my reply: Sam, I love you and "waiting" for you is not what I would consider as waiting. It's simply what my heart and soul, my body and brains tell me to do. Oh you sweet angel! There's nothing else but you I ever wanted and there never will be. If you still are telling me you don't care what I'm doing here in Austria or Germany Austria? What the hell was that? I ask you to leave me alone so I can go and live the normal life that seems to be so important. Ahh, she could be cynical when she wanted. Excellent. All that I can tell you is that I do care a lot about what you are doing over there. And yes, I want you to "wait" for me because I believe it would be worth it. I kiss you and dream of you, Stef.*

And he dreamed of her. Night and day. And a hundred times he wanted to write her, call her. But what could he tell her? She'd think he was a lunatic. Or perverted or something. On the other side – who could understand him but her?! RRRRiiiiinnng. What the hell?! Nobody had visited him since months cause he didn't want to see anybody. Hopefully not the police, he looked like shit, the house looked like shit and it was full of dope... ??????? ... What was this guy saying? His name was Sam T.!!?? He had to answer. The asshole must think he was a freak! What do you want? And who was the blonde fat chick? Hopefully not his girlfriend cause if Stef would look any like this he most likely couldn't love her either! Oh yes, he knew that he'd lived here! He wanted to see the house? Ha! ... Why did he even let him in?! Oh yes I like it. Beautiful garden and everything, yes. No, no thanks I don't want a signing; What the hell is got into this clown? And why did he look at him as if he was a piece of shit?! Stuff or Mail? No sorry, I never got anything what belongs to you. The house was completely empty when I moved in, apart from the furniture of course. He doesn't believe me, the stupid motherfucker. Come on, ask me about your box. Your ugly girlfriend probably will be interested in it too! If you want to, you could stay for lunch. My girlfriend Stef will come over soon, she's a real good cook! Haha! Now you're looking! Oh yes of course, a man like you must be real busy, I understand! Ummm that was weird. Actually he was not unpleasant that guy.

And didn't look too bad. He even was a bit like him. Same dark curls going with blue eyes (his special weapon for the ladies!), freckles, and he was a midget just like him... All right, hold on, that meant that Stef would probably love him too, if she'd only meet him!

He was getting everything ready. He could buy the ticket, but then he was broke! Of course he couldn't give up the house, cause he planned to live there with her. Well, somehow it would work out. He would have to quit his job too. The better, sooner or later they would have thrown him out anyway. Uhhh, today it surely would be only bills once again. He hated to come home after a fucked up day finding only shit lying behind his door! How wonderful it would be, if she'd sit there on the couch waiting for him! Perhaps one day... Well, let's see ... Jesus, there was a letter from her ... well, that was the last thing he had expected! He was too busy planning his trip to Germany! That was almost as good as if she would have been sitting there. Now for a cold beer, good music and her letter! Life could be so wonderful... *Dear Sam, I'm writing you to tell you that I can't take any more. I've always hoped it would get better when time passes by but it's getting worse. My loneliness and desperation grow. I'm not writing to you to let you know that I'll be dead when you read this and give you a bad consciousness. I'm writing to you to say goodbye to the one person I've loved most in my life. You've given me the ten happiest days in my life but since then I've known that I'll never be happy again. I've had everything one can have. That's why I can go but that is also why I can't stay. Forever yours, Stef. three lives // I've lived // existence in Plato's / realm of shadows / blissful / until knowledge came / which was you / and desire // tasted the kingdom of gods / with you / you divinity, you divine thing / eaten ambrosia / from you / you divinity, you divine thing / drunk nectar / out of you / you divinity // but now / paid / like Tantalus / with torments and knowledge / and knowledge in my pain / and everlasting memory*

Already dead ----- when he'd read this? ----- already dead? Already dead. Already dead. Why hadn't she waited for him?! He. Oh god, he could have made her happy again. Oh god, how could she leave him! God. -----
----- He'd have to tell him. She wanted to say goodbye. But how? How find him? How tell him? Hey man, these are your letters and now she's killed herself, sorry that I didn't give them to you earlier...? How could she leave him. How.

The letter and everything was put in the box. Fire-resistant, the seller has assured it... ugh, the gas smelled awful and it felt ugly on his clothes. Hopefully the cedar outside would not be harmed...