

**Little
FICTION.**



Listerature

Volume Two.

Featuring:

**Samuel Best • Trevor Corkum • Sharon Goldberg • Sara
Habein • Eileen Mary Holowka • Clare Kirwan • Lacy
Lalonde • Curtis Leblanc • Jennifer Manuel • Gwendolyn
Joyce Mintz • Jason Lee Norman • Angela Palm • Troy
Palmer + Philip Simondet**

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Breast cancer.

Car accident.

Plane crash.

Skiing accident.

Boating accident.

Overdose.

Complications from abortion.

Complications from delivery.

Jealous lover.

Scorned lover.

Angry lover.

Unrequited lover.

Choking (on red wine / chocolate cake / broken promises).

Peacefully, in someone else's arms.

Someone else's bed.

Someone else's life.

Not loneliness.

Never loneliness.

Things I Want

by Eileen Mary Holowka

© 2013

1. A clawfoot bathtub.
2. A typewriter.
3. A trip to Paris. Or Berlin.
 - a. Or Hawaii.
 - i. Just anywhere that's not Winnipeg, please.
4. A lifetime supply of moleskin notebooks.
5. A lifetime supply of candles.
6. A lifetime supply of liquor.
7. Smooth Skin.
 - a. Hey, a girl can dream.
8. A sexy nightgown.
9. A baby grand.
10. World peace.
 - a. I feel obligated to say this one.
 - i. Not that I don't want it, but I'm not going to lie and say it was the first thing on my list.
11. Humility.
12. A loft apartment.
13. My own flower shop.
14. A king sized bed.

15. A plain gold wedding ring.
16. An excuse to give everything away.
17. A faithful pet.
18. Something lovely.
19. All of the above.
20. None of the above.
21. I don't know.
22. You, Rodney Phillips.
23. You.

He Said, She Said

by Philip Simondet

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He said, "Let's talk."

She said, "You pick the topics."

He said, "Love at first sight."

She said it's a myth Disney created to move stories along.

He said he wasn't sure about that.

She said love is a lie men use to trick women into bed.

He said, "Could I have your number, anyway?"

She said no at first, but later yes.

He said he would call her and, to her surprise, he did.

She said she wasn't like most girls.

He said he could tell.

She said she wasn't going to give it away like some slut.

He said he'd wait.

She said she felt safe in his arms.

He said they were made for each other, molded to fit together, their contours matching and complimenting, excesses and deficiencies canceling out for perfect harmony, and not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually as well.

She said that was ridiculous.

He said he was falling in love with her.

She said nothing.

He said if he got the job in Chicago he wanted her to come with him.

She said she wasn't ready, so he turned it down.

He said he already had everything he needed.

She said she feared they'd run out of things to talk about.

He said it was his job to pick the topics.

She said she didn't deserve him.

He said that was ridiculous.

She said she wished they could stay this way forever.

He said, "Will you marry me?"

She said, "Yes."

He said this town's too small, so they bought a house in the city.

She said they didn't need one so big, but he insisted.

He said soon it would be filled with kids and would seem too small.

She said she missed her friends.

He said they had each other, and that was supposed to be enough.

She said she wasn't sure about that.

He said everything would be better when they got settled.

She said he was probably right, but was even less sure about that.

He said they should start having children.

She said she wasn't ready.

He said she wasn't getting any younger.

She said neither was he.

He said he was sorry and it would all be better soon.

She said they never talk anymore.

He said there was only so much to say after so many years.

She said she knew all along he was full of it.

He said he should have taken that job in Chicago.

She said, "I thought you said you had everything you needed."

He said he never said that.

She said, "You were right about one thing, this house does seem too small."

He said love is a lie, and he was foolish to think they belonged together.

She said he didn't deserve her.

He said, "Are you saying you want a divorce?"

She said nothing.

How To Be A Writer

by Angela Palm

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1. Quit modestly paying, full-time job
2. Self-diagnose depression, but don't seek treatment
3. Complain about a lack of motivation despite having ample time to write after having quit time-consuming job
4. Wear glasses and, if possible, scarves
5. Drink coffee during p.m. hours
6. Drink alcohol during a.m. hours
7. Think about writing
8. Read about writing
9. Add "Writer" to job section of Facebook page
10. Tell friends and family you are a writer
11. Repeat Step 10
12. Tell a stranger named Matthew that you are a writer
13. Sleep with Matthew or his friend Michelle, or both
14. Get a pet turtle and name it Anaïs Nin
15. Get another pet turtle and name it Doris Day
16. Write dialogues between Anaïs Nin and Doris Day
17. Post the dialogues on your Tumblr blog
18. Repeat Step 10
19. Say "yes" to every opportunity you're offered for 24 hours

20. Say “no” to every opportunity you’re offered for 24 hours
21. Write a story about yes/no experience
22. Set the story on fire with Matthew’s lighter, which fell under your couch when you were screwing him, when you realize the story is a boring version of Sliding Doors
23. Cry in the shower
24. Try again
25. Don’t return Matthew’s lighter, even when he asks about it

Deficit

by Curtis Leblanc

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1.

The number of drinks I've promised to others.

2.

The number of drinks I've had by myself.

Rust

by Sara Habein

© 2013

Nails:

Left in the shed, scattered, of various sizes. Once he made a wooden crate for his records. He thought, one day, he might build a whole shelf.

Metal bucket:

Cigarette butts, bent and pinched, ash. Folgers can of indeterminate age. He never pretended to make New Year's resolutions.

Tobacco tin:

Long-forgotten brand from the early '80s, once held rolling papers. Once held grass. "I could do worse things," he said. "Considering."

Hubcaps and tools:

Wrenches, '72 Pontiac (purchased new), tree clippers. Once, he told the kids he could play the saw. How surprised was I when he did.

Old barbed wire:

Stashed with a grey tarp thrown on top. "It used to border my

mother's garden," he said. "Those squirrel fuckers never saw it coming."

Gate and hinges:

Creak, powdered red creak, still attached to the fence. A miracle. Anyone could go in and out.

Faucet and shaving cream:

Barbasol, the bottom an echo on the porcelain sink. The tap drains life in a streak. Gravity.

Aging red hair:

If I squint, I see the parts of him not swept away. No patience, no diligence, too many Band-Aids.

Waterslides, at the joints:

Edmonton, the mall, the water park. So much spectacle, then forgotten. He drove us there once, 1997.

Detroit:

Where I called, where his brother documents squatters in foreclosed houses. Where I only get the machine.

Railroad ties to Buffalo:

Where his mother has forgotten his name, where the kids fear to tread. Where the winter is long.

Wishing well:

Too cynical to hope, too superstitious to not. As though it changed anything, I threw loonies. I threw up.

Skills:

A life disused, a bridge, a building. Does it matter? He's gone.

Numbers

by Sharon Goldberg

© 2013

One: Boy I've ever loved—Gunnar Caldwell

Two: Times we had sex without a condom

Three: Months since my last period

Four: Pregnancy tests I took to be sure

Five: Friends I borrowed money from

Six: Days in a row I've vomited

Seven: Lies I told my parents

Eight: Hours until my abortion

Nine: Texts Gunnar didn't answer

Ten: Days until I turn fifteen

How To Fly A Plane

(From Someone Who Has Never Flown A Plane Before)

by Jason Lee Norman

© 2013

1. Go to Pilot School. Pilot schools are everywhere. Usually in the backs of little country airports. If you show up there they will give you a pile of books to read first about trajectory and velocity and thrust and things like that.
2. Come back to take some written tests and then they'll take you up in a real airplane.
3. When I say real airplane, I mean a tiny plane that is not meant to stay up in the sky for very long. If you want to be a pilot then you have to be ready and able to make anything stay up in the sky for as long as you need it to. These planes were all built in the fifties out of tin and fiberglass and they work better as boats than as planes.
4. Larger airplanes, like 747s, were built by engineers in huge testing facilities. These planes were meant to stay up in the sky.
5. Once in the plane, take the throttle and push it forwards and take the steering mechanism and pull it backwards. That's throttle: forwards, steering mechanism: backwards.

6. When you are way up in the sky you need to level the plane out. You do this by pushing the steering mechanism in a little bit, but not as much as you pulled it out by. You also pull the throttle back a little too. That's steering mechanism: forwards, throttle: backwards.

7. When the plane is level in the sky, you are now flying a plane.

8. It's a good idea to have strong forearms.

9. Flying is the most unnatural thing in the entire world. Nothing was meant for flight. Maybe insects. If you've ever watched a bird in flight then you know that it looks like one of the most desperate acts in nature. The flapping of wings is never graceful. A bird always looks like it is begging God to keep it in the air for just a little while longer.

10. The only birds that do not look desperate are the ones that have wingspans so large they can just glide on air currents for hours and hours. But if you've ever watched one of these large birds flapping its wings then you know how laborious it can look. Like a

human looks climbing a very tall mountain. We look as if we're not really supposed to be there but we are there and we are very tired from trying.

11. Every force of nature is pulling you and that plane to the ground. Never let go and you'll be fine.

12. Never let go.

Things Megan Regrets

by Samuel Best

© 2013

1. Buying him that wristwatch for his birthday next month
2. Imagining their kids' names
3. Coming home early
4. Opening the bedroom door
5. Nine years wasted

To Rewrite History

by Gwendolyn Joyce Mintz

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Names, as a child, I wanted to give the sons I'd one day have:

1. Michael
2. Jonathan
3. Jeff
4. Sydney
5. Tyler
6. Frank, although I planned to always call him Frankie

Name of the one daughter I wanted:

1. Lauren

Family members who were abused as children:

1. A distant cousin
2. A nephew
3. Aunt Lois
4. Grandma Judy
5. My mother
6. Me

Name of OB/GYN who will perform the surgery:

1. Dr. Kerry

Names of the children I will protect by never bringing them into existence:

1. Lauren
2. Tyler
3. Jeff
4. Sydney
5. Michael
6. Jonathan
7. Frank, although I had planned to always call him Frankie

Report Card Comments From The Far North

(From Miss Royston, Grade Five / Six Class)

by Jennifer Manuel

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Jay, Grade 5. Minimally Meeting Expectations.

Jay shows little respect in the classroom. The other day he called me a redneck bitch when I asked him to finish his math. Apparently you told him that all white teachers are racist morons. Is there any chance you could at least pretend to show the school some respect? Otherwise I don't have a hope in hell. Also, he needs to practice his multiplication at home more often.

Darryl, Grade 6. Fully Meeting Expectations.

Darryl seems to have a lot more confidence since bagging his first moose. I know it's customary to share your first kill with everybody in the community; nevertheless I thought it was very kind that he brought moose nose and stuffed bumguts for the whole class last week. I am wondering, however, if he can leave his bullets at home. I keep finding them on the classroom floor. It's a little unsettling.

Sonja, Grade 6. Not Yet Meeting Expectations.

Sonja's progress has suffered because of her frequent absences. True, all students were excused from several school days because it was minus fifty-five outside, but even on the days she is here, she

is not really present. Perhaps her apathy will diminish once there is sunlight more than four hours a day. We should talk about the holes she's carved into her science textbook with her pen. It will need to be replaced.

Julie, Grade 5. Fully Meeting Expectations.

I'm pretty sure your daughter knows you are the local crack dealer. She composed a lovely diorama full of rich details.

Charlie, Grade 6. Exceeding Expectations.

Charlie is inquisitiveness and has a commendable eagerness to learn. He is always cheerful, even after riding that school bus with the broken heater for eighty kilometres every morning. Honestly, Charlie and the other children who come from the Iskut Reserve are tough as nails. Sometimes it takes me an hour to be able to hold a piece of chalk after walking two blocks to school.

Tamara, Grade 6. Not Yet Meeting Expectations.

As you know, I have been concerned about Tamara's depression. As I recall, you told me to mind my own business. Thought you

might be interested to hear about the moose calf that wandered onto our soccer field last month. When it couldn't find a way back out, it pummeled itself into the chain-link fence until it lay in blood and snow. Tamara said, See? Even the moose commit suicide here.

June, Grade 6. Minimally Meeting Expectations.

June has difficulty concentrating. Clearly it's worse the mornings after you and your boyfriend party all night. If you have any interest in how June is doing, I welcome you to phone me at the school, but perhaps you could wait until you're sober. I couldn't make out a single word last time. Also, June would benefit from a more nutritional lunch: she didn't understand last week why there was only a pack of your cigarettes and a dirty spoon in her lunch bag.

Robert, Grade 6. Minimally Meeting Expectations.

At the beginning of the school year, Robert showed a keen interest in math. Not so much anymore. It's your business if you want to medicate Robert's behaviour but it makes your son look terribly stoned and since taking the pills, he spends his recess picking apart his granola bar instead of playing with his friends. I'd rather

deal with his outbursts than see him like this.

George, Grade 5. Fully Meeting Expectations.

Does George own a coat thicker than that jean jacket? It's been minus forty.

Jessie, Grade 5. Exceeding Expectations.

Jessie did very well on our Nutrition Unit, which is ironic since I'm pretty certain she is malnourished. I think it's wonderful that you drive a lunch over to her at the school everyday, but I think she might benefit from more than a large bag of ketchup chips and a litre of Pepsi.

Ryan, Grade 5. Fully Meeting Expectations.

At the Community Career Fair, Ryan demonstrated strong assertiveness when he told the representative from Shell Canada to "stay the fuck out of the Sacred Headwaters or we'll hunt you down." Next term we'll learn about community activism in Social Studies, so perhaps he find interest in this topic and learn about more peaceful approaches.

Tommy, Grade 6. Fully Meeting Expectations.

Tommy gave a thorough presentation on snowmobiles this term. Unfortunately he ended up in a fistfight with another student over which sleds are faster, Polaris or Arctic Cat. When I threatened to phone you about it, he said that, as his Polaris-riding father, you'd be proud. As an aside, could you please stop sending me propositions inside Tommy's lunch bag? I know there aren't a lot of women up here, but you're making me very uncomfortable.

Michelle, Grade 5. Minimally Meeting Expectations.

I had a hard time addressing your daughter's special needs this term. The Education Assistant hasn't been able to get out of her shifts at the truck-stop restaurant.

Joseph, Grade 6. Fully Meeting Expectations.

Joseph is fairly well behaved but is often unwilling to try new things. Too nervous, I suspect. When you came into our classroom after school and told Joseph that he'd "better clean up his fucking shithole mess of a desk" or you'll "fucking break his fucking neck," I'm wondering if maybe you might not do that in front of the other

children. The language is a bit spicy for the classroom.

Gregory, Grade 6. Minimally Meeting Expectations.

Parent-teacher interviews are coming up next week. Could you and your husband show up before spending the afternoon at the bar?

Thank you.

Two Swans

by Clare Kirwan

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Day 1

It starts with two swans crafted from white bath towels, perfectly proportioned, swimming gracefully on a fluted beach towel lake. We are delighted and leave a few pesos for the maid.

Day 2

An enormous papier-mâché butterfly has been lovingly assembled from toilet paper, coat hangers and the television aerial. Its delicate membranes quiver in the air-conditioning as though preparing for flight. We leave a few pesos, and a request for new loo roll. We cannot watch television, so we read.

Day 3

A poem by Jose Marti, folk hero, is spelled out beautifully on the white tiles in blue shampoo, yellow shower gel and an unknown red substance for the parts that mention martyrdom. We leave a few pesos but have to clean it off before we can use the bathroom.

Day 4

The room is ankle deep in frangipani flowers, the smell so

intoxicating that we feel compelled to make love all night. We leave pesos and a note of gratitude.

Day 5

The ants that arrived with the frangipani have been lured by trails of sugar to form exquisite patterns on the balcony. They have stopped biting now.

Day 6

An anatomically correct tyrannosaurus constructed with sheets, blankets and pillows. Although not life size, it fills the room. My husband marvels at the engineering, with its skeleton of plumbing fixtures. We leave a few pesos and an apologetic note asking for the toilet to be looked at it does not seem to be working.

Day 7

Sunday. Nothing. We are ashamed to feel relieved, but only in some ways. The toilet has not been fixed.

Day 8

A scale model of the local town has been constructed from our own dried excrement. It smells exactly like the town, and clearly a lot of work has gone into it so we leave a few pesos and use the replacement shampoo to clear it up a bit. We go to bed very late.

Day 9

A papier-mâché bust of El Commandante has been sculpted from the new supply of toilet paper and a glue-like substance, possibly spittle. There is a letter from the manager asking us to use less toilet paper as supplies are limited. I have to wipe my arse on the only parts of El Commandante that are easily removed – his beard and cap. We leave a few pesos and a polite note requesting that our supplies are spared.

Day 10

There are no sculptures, but in the middle of the night a six-piece band—guitar, maracas, bongos, double bass – serenades us on our own balcony. We give them a few pesos to go away.

Day 11

They have trained a flock of dragonflies to perform basic manoeuvres. The room is filled with the beatings of tiny neon wings and flashes of iridescent blue in synchronised patterns.

Day 12

On the last day we open our door with some trepidation. The maid and her fifteen-year-old daughter lie naked on our bed covered in hibiscus flowers and scented with frangipani. They have nothing left to give.

The Promises I Made And The Ones I Kept

by Lacy Lalonde

© 2013

- ~~1. To call you after you gave me your number.~~
2. To show up on time every time after you told me how much you hated it when people were late.
3. To take you camping because I thought it was such a shame that you had never been.
4. To show up at your birthday party even though I knew I wouldn't because technically that would have made it only our second date.
- ~~5. To make up for not going to your birthday party.~~
6. To no longer leave on a bad note after a slew of fights where one or the other or the both of us would storm off out of frustration, anger, hurt feelings, or to prove some sort of strange point.
- ~~7. To jump off a 25 foot bridge into a body of water of unknown depth, in the dark, as penance for not showing up to your birthday party that time the year before.~~
8. To take you to that new fancy restaurant that opened up down the block from my place after we walked passed it one night and you mentioned how you would like to check it out some time.
- ~~9. To stop threatening to leave you every time we have a big argument after that one month where I had broken up with you~~

~~3 times only to have ran back to you filled with sorrow and regret and practically begging you for forgiveness.~~

~~10. To always remain faithful to you after questioning my loyalty because you heard one of my friends in a drunken state tell the story about the short period in my life where I dated two women at the same time and neither of them knew about it.~~

11. To never hurt you after that first time I hurt you.

12. To do or not do a promise that you said I made to you one night when I was drunk, but for some reason you refused to tell me what it was and still expected me to have done it.

13. To never lie to you again after you caught me lying about going to my mother's when really I had gone to that bachelor party you had already said you didn't want me to go to.

14. To marry you after you proposed.

15. To never give up on you after you screamed you couldn't take the fighting anymore and wanted to give up on me.

~~16. To love you forever.~~

17. To give you your space after you told me that we needed a break and the only way it would really work is if I didn't come around for a while.

18. To make you regret ever leaving me after you left me.

~~19. To stop threatening to kill myself after the second time I called
you crying in the middle of the night.~~

20. To kill myself.

Diagnostic Checklist

**A Review of Common Body Fluids in the
Case of Casey Cripps**

by Trevor Corkum

© 2013

Amniotic Fluid:

The subject is tested *in utero* at sixteen weeks, as per standard procedure. Test results come back within normal range.

Breast Milk:

The subject responds well to maternal stimulation and shows average- to above-average bone growth during the first year.

Urine:

The subject is tested after mother complains of trace amounts of blood in the urine, unusual in a five-year-old. Further testing reveals the presence of a nephroblastoma. Subject's left kidney removed.

Mucous:

Subject observed as "sensitive" and "disruptive" by teacher. Subject observed repeatedly wiping miniscule bullets of snot onto the desks of minority, poor and special needs students. Subject's mother tells subject's teacher she is "demeaning" and "a cold Toronto bitch" for picking on a ten-year-old cancer survivor.

Sebum:

As noted in previous literature, successive treatments of chemotherapy may negatively alter endocrinal processes. In the case of the subject, puberty is delayed, though typical skin problems are noted. Hydrocortisone treatment administered for *acne vulgaris*.

Sweat:

Subject experiences excessive sweat during nighttime episodic hallucinations. Subject reports vivid dreams of travelling slowly on remote-controlled hang glider over long, thick, musty canal, waking up unable to breathe, but with a powerful, sustained erection.

Saliva:

Subject reports first incidence of mouth-to-mouth contact with other post-pubescent male during drunken post-hockey sleepover. Subject of subject's advances, guy by the name of Sudsy, admits the next morning he "blacked out" and experiences recurring episodic memory loss. Subject later admits in secret online diary to "feelings" for his friend.

Vaginal Secretions:

Subject boasts to Sudsy of observing petite Ukrainian gymnast named Anastasia ejaculating onto computer screen from distance of several feet. Reports unconfirmed.

Semen:

While watching late-night amateur MILF porn on subject's brother's laptop, subject and subject's buddy engage in mutual masturbation on subject's velour basement couch. Subject reports incredulity at the combined seminal output of Sudsy and self, recalling great difficulty in later removing unfortunate Jesus-shaped stain from maroon rose-patterned wallpaper.

Blood:

Subject observes Sudsy succumb to vicious on-ice brawl. Like majority of drunken fans, subject taunts and jeers opposing team; yet feels soft quiver of pride when Sudsy's blood flows freely into heart-shaped pool on centre of the ice.

Spinal Fluid:

Subject found unconscious beneath Sudsy's overturned Ford Escape in dimly lit ravine. Sudsy unharmed. Subject retrieved by first responders and transported to Mount Sinai Hospital, where tests confirm fracture in lumbar region of vertebrae. Spinal inflammation and paraplegia diagnosed.

Feces:

On eve of class graduation, subject consumes unfortunate combination of guacamole, a dozen deep-fried Mars bars, one-half a Mexican spicy deep-dish pizza, and a 12-pack of Bud plus various fruit-flavoured coolers. Subject ignored repeatedly and pointedly by Sudsy at mock casino roulette table and fake Vegas slot machines. Subject's personal care attendant, shy Filipino lad by the name of Lonni Chi, required to change and clean up subject on several unrelated occasions, including two dance floor "slippage incidents".

Bile:

After sixteen years of remission, malignant cells return. Subject diagnosed with Stage IV metastatic liver cancer.

Vitreous Humour:

Subject spends twenty-two solid hours watching illegal downloads of *The Wire*. Considers writing end-of-life blog. Stares at own reflection in mirror for prolonged period of time, until no longer recognizes face.

Pus:

Recovering at home following third bout of chemotherapy, subject is discovered with gangrenous sore in the extremities of left foot, consistent with poor circulation. Gangrene spreads, entering subject's bloodstream and attacking compromised immune system.

Tears:

Subject lies serenely in faux oak coffin, dressed in favourite hockey jersey. Hands are folded together formally yet naturally, as if to indicate peaceful sleep. Subject's buddy Sudsy kneels beside the body, head bowed, blinking and swallowing compulsively. *You were a good man Cripps* is what he tries to say, admiring the bloated face of the deceased. *You were a real good fucking guy Cripps.*



Listerature Vol. 2

Editing and art direction by Troy Palmer.
Pencil designed by david barnhart
from The Noun Project.

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